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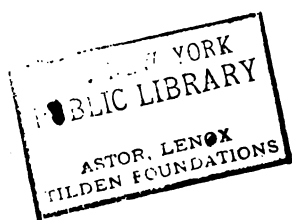
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**"RESOLUTE AS A QUEEN . . . WHILE THE  
STILL SMOKING PISTOL——"**

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# ONGON

*A Tale of Early Chicago*

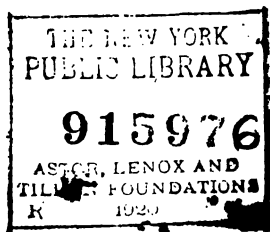
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1920



TO MY  
GREAT HEARTED WIFE

WHOSE CHEERFULNESS AND LOVING MINISTRATIONS  
HAVE BEEN TO ALL HER FRIENDS  
AN INSPIRATION

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY THE AUTHOR



## FOREWORD

**B**EFORE writing this tale, the author visited the places in Virginia connected with the story. In the ancient churchyard of Opecquon, deep in the quiet of the Shenandoah Valley, are yet standing the simple monuments to the memory of the sturdy Scotch-Irish pioneers of Kentucky and Illinois. Here, upon the oldest tombstone in northern Virginia, Washington's hands must have been laid when, as a young Colonel he rode out from Winchester to worship at the only church near Fort Loudon. A few rods down the gentle slope, a century later Sheridan galloped in his famous ride from Winchester. To-day a new stone edifice has taken the place of the old Presbyterian meeting-house of Opecquon. At its door a plain granite pillar has been erected by one of the leading families of Chicago in honor of its dead. In this valley Jean's childhood was passed.

The year 1833, in which the scenes of this book are laid, brought to Chicago and northern Illinois men and women of strong minds and affectionate hearts, whose forefathers prepared the way for the third and fourth generation. Ere yet the Indians were removed, Harriet Martineau, visiting Chicago, was astonished at the intellectual vigor and true refinement of its first citizens, who, enduring cheerfully every privation, set their faces steadfastly toward the future of the village. Meanwhile the Indians, completing a quarter of a century of loyalty and good will, drew on to the hour of their great desolation. From legend and history and the lives of their illustrious chiefs, we have a marvelous picture of these canoe and prairie tribes struggling against fate. That fate leaves a door ajar through which a superior race may do well to walk softly.

While spending a week with the Indians in Colorado last summer, the author was impressed with the ideals which, much writing to the contrary, are cherished by the red men. God needs not to apologize for having created the Indian. Philosophers may go to school to him; psychologists may find abundant material in him for a master-work on the slow but sure development and supremacy of mind; statesmen may trace in this American savage potentials of character that make for civic power; and ministers of the gospel may come to discover in him another justification of God's ways to man. A distinguished senator of Colorado, cheerfully giving the author of Ongon an hour of his vacation time, was bold to affirm that he

## Foreword

thought the Indian a moral being and the Christian religion adapted to help the Creator complete his plan in every part of his great, ethical world. We smile when we put our affirmations into sentences; but many of us have held the tomahawk so close to our eyes that we have never really seen the Indian.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Schoolcraft's "Indian Tribes of the United States," prepared 1847 and published 1855, for the "Lake Song" printed in Ongon on page 98, and for the Indian chant on page 107. These were taken respectively from Part V, pages 562 and 612. On page 606 may be found the entire chapter of I Cor. 13 in the Indian tongue. The "Dog Dance," printed on page 139, is taken from "Haines' American Indian," page 533—a work far too valuable not to be found in either the Astor or the New York Public Libraries. Chicago possesses at least two copies, one at the Newberry, the other at the Public Library. Ongon's legend, which he tells on page 135, is adapted from Mathew's translation of the "Winter Spirit and His Visitor" in Mason's "Indian Fairy Book," published in 1856, page 261. Black Hawk in his biography, dictated by himself, 1833, speaks of the Indian's wooing enacted in the little play of chapter XLIII. in Ongon. Catherine Dale, as well as her early philosophy of religion, will be recognized by many. In another dress she is the saddened Russian artist who, with an American sphere, might have achieved health and happiness in the end. Sometimes in this book an authentic Indian quotation will be used or modified to show the Indian's fondness for figures of speech.

For their esteemed service in helping out a three-months' research, the librarians and assistants of the Congressional Library, Washington; the Newberry and Historical libraries of Chicago, and New York Astor and Public libraries are heartily thanked. The Chicago Public Library is so accustomed to distribute goodness without expecting gratitude that any mention of its thousand and one kindnesses would be considered a superfluous expense of energy. One may take from its shelves a hundred books to write a line, and only be asked, Be brief.

# Ongon

## I

### THE CACHE

He who will take Jean to his heart shall learn why, for a season, she chose to be called Lusette. Then he will return to the warm, bright stillness of the early June afternoon, and understand what gratitude lay in her own heart, and how much more she meant than she expressed when her lips murmured that the playful ripples of Lake Michigan, brown and violet and blue, were myriads of eyes arching their brows and dancing with welcome for them on the shore.

"Oh, thousand years of unseen beauty, given for a moment of mind!" Very beautiful was Jean addressing the lake, lifting a face that seemed the human counterpart of the ever-changing delicate colors on the waters. From the depth of her woman's feeling, her countenance, too, suggested that, like the quiet Michigan, it might become storm-tossed with passion. Therefore, the highest light that played in her eyes and seemed to move upon her lips was the promise of a strength of self-mastery. Though just now she led in the playful mood, there was a tenderness even in her abandon. Had she spoken her real thoughts, they had been tears—and not unworthy of greatest joy.

Her maid and companion, now called Gurgling Water, and now Josie, was younger in years, Indian, and from her speech educated. Once Jean had called her pretty and roguish—the very spirit of a merry smile that had taken a fourteen-year-ply sunburn, and thence had turned up human and feminine. Then the mistress had been answered by a devotion of eyes. Savage is the delight for praise.

The two were kneeling in the sands with flowers, rejoicing in a strangely fascinating task. They had formed a cross of wild primroses, and the letters "O. A." of violets upon a delicate framework of primrose stems. The Indian girl had enjoyed the play of trying to make her fingers move as deftly as those of her mistress, while laughingly endeavoring as well to grasp with a quick mind the mystery of words.



## Ongon

"Josie," said Jean, when the work was completed to their satisfaction and they had paused to feel its daintiness and to feast their eyes again upon the color scheme of sky and waters, "think of it, for days as these sands for multitude, this lake has slept and swept in brimming isolation from the world."

"Merrigo, has it, Lusette," replied the Indian maiden, tapping her forehead to settle the new words safely for definitions when interests should lull.

"How Ongon must look when he stands upon the shore. Heaven grant it to breathe with the air into his blood that the world was created in thought of him."

Her maid could understand such love, and was not forbidden the privilege of answering by placing a heart of violets in her mistress' hair. She knew also why the subject was changed so abruptly.

"Do you think, Gurgling Water, to these odd breadths of green and red in my robe any folds of admission cling that what we have adopted is not unadapted?—Do I look like a gypsy?"

"I would never take you for a gypsy," answered the girl, replying to the understood section of the sentence, with admiration for the red and green confusion of words, and genuine Indian fondness for the realities with which the body of her mistress was clad.

"It's my Scotch-Irish face, Josie, and all the training at the female seminary," said Jean, reopening the black box which they had discovered in the plundered *cache*.

"It was strange that they left the box and didn't find what was in it—and to think if my horse hadn't run away we should not have come here to give yours a drink before he must carry us both!"

"And not have discovered the *cache* made by Ongon had been opened by some one?—Nay, Josie, then must we have needs been drawn hither by other powers."

Josie was whispering it, "And to think, Lusette, your name in the box and that ring!"

"And this magazine, too, Gurgling Water; see Ongon has marked this for a study." It was an almost current number of the *Museum* with an engraving of Hogarth's painting "Marriage a la Mode"; the pencil marks were against a poem descriptive of the painting.

"In his own person centres all his pride,  
And as his bride loves him, he loves his pride."

"The bridegroom has turned away from his bride in love with himself," read Lusette. "He is gazing in the mirror with delight in

## The Cache

an affected style, displaying his snuff-box and glittering ring. The ceiling is decorated with Pharaoh's host drowning in the sea.'"

"Who was Pharaoh?" inquired Josie; "what has that to do with a selfish husband?"

"The critic must never go too far, my dear," said the young mistress; "but Pharaoh was pursuing the Hebrews, perhaps your ancestors, before they became the lost tribes and some of them reached America. You have a history then before my forefathers were known."

"Tell me of your fathers, Josie will keep the secret."

The pages had slipped on to a quotation from Goethe that historical writing is a way of getting rid of the past. "Historical telling is the same sort of a way, Josie, we don't know much about the Scotch-Irish, only we are called Presbyterian Irish, and fight and die, but never surrender. Celt and Saxon are in us combined after each had been refined and tempered. We are energetic, vigorous, home-loving, from-home-roving people. Patrick Henry was one of us, and Thomas Jefferson, and Hamilton. We have been called the kernel of Americanism; much we helped Washington and every good cause since. My great-grandfather was a preacher who followed bridle paths and Indian trails in Virginia, seeking small places in which to do some good. At night he unsaddled his horse and hobbled him with hickory bark and turned him to the hills. Then he slept with his saddle-bag for a pillow and the stars for the silver design in his ceiling. We are plainer people in our customs than the Cavaliers of our Virginia, but our men 'reckon we have done as much good'—oh——!"

Trained to follow her mistress quickly, if at all, Josie was searching the page for the sudden excitement. "'Mr. Harry Clermont,'" she read at the bottom of an engraving of a noted secret service man. "He's from Virginia, too, Lusette?" now finding more in the face of her companion than in the picture.

"Yes, the magazine is having a run of engravings by such men as Keenan. Mr. Clermont is among the successful men, you see. Here is a face I like better; isn't he handsome!"

She had turned to another month and both were engaged by the full-length print of Major John Trenton, one of the heroes of the Black Hawk War of the year before. But Josie had been taught to trail interesting ideas with the eagerness of her race for game, and she soon discovered that the direction of her mistress' thought was towards the other one. "Who was he, Lusette?"

"Yes, Mr. Clermont is a Cavalier, Gurgling Water."

## Ogon

"And who are they, Lusette?"

"The Cavaliers are proud aristocrats from England who love to hear the cultured rustle of approaching silks," affected the mistress.

"And you are jealous—then I won't like them."

"But we must hurry; if we should be found here, it would spoil everything," said Jean, although the horizon was clear.

"He will never know what the "A" means until——"

"Until he knows all, Josie," answered her mistress, bending over the violets tenderly. "Now we are ready to put in the flowers, but not a word beside, alas! Cover them gently, so."

"Why don't it crush things more to bury them in sand, Lusette?" asked Josie, when they had begun industriously to pull down the sand dune into the hole. "Why can we bury eggs but a few inches and walk over them without crushing them?"

"Because the weight is distributed laterally, as they say, or side-wise by every grain of sand. The whole world gets part of the push of the foot as well as the little egg. Now the very dry sand on top, Josie, there! we can mount and away."

They rode along at a steady jog until Lusette's eyes were satisfied that they had gone as far as they might safely dare together, when she dismounted and gave the Indian girl the reins. "You will have to keep them in your hand for my horse," she said, smiling, when Josie playfully grasped the mane as her usual hold and means of guidance.

"We could go all the way together," protested the Indian maiden.

"Too slow, Gurgling Water, if discovered. You know just what to do with the box if any one pursues you?"

"Yes."

"You shall have a new dress for this, Josie, only be sure to avoid everybody along the road—even Wautoma—and put the box exactly where I have said."

"Josie will be careful,—oh, merrigo, Lusette!"

The exclamation followed the dropping of a thick brown veil over the face of her mistress, whose fingers still kept in lingering touch of the box even after the hands had let go of it.

"Is it good, Josie?"

"Oh, merrigo, merrigo, Lusette," laughed the girl, "they will never know you together with that and the heavy cloak!"

"It is good, then, and this is the way I must walk." The utter awkwardness caused even the horse to prick up his ears.

"Is my Lusette sure that they put a beaver fur in there, too?"

## Evening at the Tavern

asked the girl at last when they must depart on their separate ways in earnest.

"It is gone—taken by some one who learned that they were to bury the things, that is plain."

"Then why wasn't this box stolen too?"

"Perhaps to catch us," returned her mistress. "Now, Gurgling Water, ride hard, and I will be home by the stage to-morrow."

Not waiting for a second command the girl wheeled the horse about and was off along the shore at a rapid canter, turning once to note that the figure behind her had lifted the veil and was waving her a good journey with the same wondrously pleased look that she had worn ever since they had found the box.

Breathing a prayer aloud to the Great Spirit to keep her beautiful Lusette from all harm, the Indian maiden laid her open fingers upon her heart and thence saluted towards her mistress, receiving a kindred salutation in return. They had vowed again to seek each other's good in the simple but expressive language of Indian signs.

Then Jean walked rapidly in the direction whence the blue smoke was curling lazily against the sky. Because she chose to wear a veil on this afternoon, it would not be in keeping with that preference to tell, while she is on the sands, of her eyes and hair and natural grace.

"Breath Master!—Great Spirit!—God!"—suddenly she had thrown aside the rôle she was to play and was kneeling in the sand. "If Thou wilt truly help me to save my brother Ongon, then wilt Thou give his sister strength to wait until she can see him wisely, with courage for dangers and protection from every foe." Dear orphan child, with thy great love, Heaven hears thee, go forward in peace. So she felt the message had come to her heart when she arose and journeyed onward to the inn.

## II

### EVENING AT THE TAVERN

When Ongon's sister reached the rude tavern toward which she had directed her steps, a second surprise was in store for her, to be met as unexpectedly as the box in the opened *cache*. The inn was one of a little chain of public houses that had begun to offer immigrants—and already some few emigrants—the luxury of a night's wayside lodging, such as it was and for a price.

Yes, she could have the only room unoccupied upstairs, since she

## Ongon

had conveyed the impression that she would rather part with her money than with her incognito. Though the obliging landlord, relieving her in advance of a considerable portion of the contents of her purse, would never have revealed by his eyes how much also he had obtained of her identity, nevertheless the change spoke for itself.

"Sir, you have returned me more than is due," observed Jean, counting back the difference.

"I made a mistake in naming the price," said the host deferentially.

"Oh!"

There was more astonishment on the part of the veiled lady than could be accounted for by the amount of money, but she tried immediately not to have appeared to recognize the gentleman at the desk with the landlord. And while the innkeeper observed and came adroitly to her rescue, his words confirmed her brief glance.

"Ah, those wicked soldiers, Mr. Clermont, when they came back last year from following Black Hawk, they would insist on the beauties of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, and here we poor tavern-keepers are, victims of our inability to supply half the room desired!"

"Alas," murmured the disguised celebrity, "limited capacity in the busy season takes away the poetry of inn-keeping, I should judge."

"Oh, there's poetry enough," twinkled the host. "Two months ago a party of newly married young folk came along,"—the manner of his telling it was enough to hold Jean for a moment in spite of herself—"and they were full of poetry. 'Think of it,' cried the little wife in ecstasy, 'long lines of prairie schooners, my uncle said—he was a soldier, you know—floating over the plains! They toss their precious freight in a sea of beautiful flower-gemmed prairie grass which has swept every tree from the horizon—except where a little river anchors an occasional grove!'"

"Exquisite," said Clermont, "but when the sentiment subsided?"

"It left them face to face with painted Indians—then I had them as guests the second time, on the home voyage, via the prairie schooner, so to speak."

As Jean mounted the stairs musing upon the reason of the presence of the noted Virginian, the face of the landlord and the brightness of his conversation, in contrast with the sadness of his eyes, forced themselves upon her. The inn-keeper's features wore the habit of one who had come to be a bargainer, but his eyes were too

## Evening at the Tavern

honest a brown to admit the native sharper. This the return of the change had proved as well. Here was a man past thirty, perhaps, with a history. Of Mr. Clermont—she smiled to herself under the veil.

"The travelers keep a-comin', the travelers keep a-comin'," was the tavern-keeper's happy murmur to himself as the day wore into night and his guests became a host.

The last to arrive, and destined to give the landlord as great a shock of surprise as Clermont's presence had occasioned Jean, was out of humor. Having tossed his bridle to a servant, with the remark that this was a devilish treeless sort of a place for a town-site, and having gone out of his way to kick a bush with his boot to make sure that it was not a crouching Indian, he pushed the open door farther ajar and passed in, paying no attention to the oath of the owner of the pair of legs stretched upon the floor.

The room with its partitions constituted the lower floor of the inn, and, owing to the crowded condition of the house, was by evening serving in the combined capacity of sample-room, dining-room, and smoking-room, bedroom, parlor, and hotel office.

"Saints, Bulbsy!" muttered the landlord to himself, rising from his seat behind the counter. "Good-evening——?"

"Buhl-Bysee," answered the latest guest, so writing his name on the register, "and yours?"

"Craps," replied the host.

"Anybody passing?"

"Major Trenton, yesterday."

Buhl-Bysee looked up quickly, but the landlord apparently had merely mentioned the name of the most popular of his recent guests, and was checking the register.

"Seems to me I have seen you before?" said the newcomer.

"Yes?"

But he was not in a searching frame of mind, being hungry. "Have you anything fit to eat, for I see you haven't a confounded place to sleep?"

"All full of ladies, too," nodded the landlord to further divert the attention of the guest.

The rude partitions which received the benefit of the inn-keeper's gesture, bulging out with extra beds, were making no attempt to hide the articles of apparel between the cracks, that arrangement of clothing being, in truth, the attempt of their feminine owners to hide themselves.

"Humph!"

## Ongon

With such remark Buhl-Bysee turned his back on the landlord with an order for the best he had; after which he advanced to a long table at the farthest end of the room, where a company of the more jovial guests were making the night merry, and a few of the more industrious, profitable.

At the sound of his voice floating out from the open window, the other side of the shrub that had received the attention of the Buhl-Bysee's boot crept nearer the dining side of the hotel office, and to the faculty of self-transplantation added that of audition.

"Two hundred dollars, did I hear you say, for a lot in Chicago? 'Pon my honor, man, you are too generous! Why I can buy a farm of a hundred and sixty acres of land for half the money!"

It was not this conversation between two bargainers that held the ears of the listening bush outside.

"Dull country, did I hear you say?" some one was answering Buhl-Bysee, "why look at that man for a good adventure!"

He was showing something that elicited admiration around the table.

"There we are, I got that exquisite fur along with one of the few romances that come to a man, I tell you."

Was the bush growing taller or was it only imagination to the eye of Lusette up-stairs at the window? Now it was collapsing again.

In response to a request for the story of his adventure, the owner of the fur was beginning to recount his tale.

"There is in these parts some mysterious agency that has bound together a strange band of Indians who go about in becoming costumes of gray with a cross on their breasts. Every one of the band—how many there are I do not know—is pledged to obey some one or something for which they have a name. Sometimes they pronounce it in a soft way that would seem to be a whispered 'ON,' and then again with more force like "GUN." From hearing the first you might fancy it is a human being, but then again you are led to believe that it is a force, perhaps the force of powder driving home the rifle ball they half worship.

"Whatever the nature of the power that binds together these peculiar Indians, at least some one among them is led by it to practice some of the more useful arts. What could be more intelligent than the way they have dressed this beaver? They had to know how to salt the pelt, wash it, remove the fat, cut out the long coarse hairs, and perhaps in the end dye it a dozen times.

"But this is not my story. A few nights ago, when making my outward trip not far from here, I saw a light on the lake on an

## Evening at the Tavern

approaching canoe. It was a very dark and cloudy night, just the kind of an evening when men select an hour to do mysterious things, and, says I, lay low old fellow, and see what turns up. Which I did, though I'll be hanged if I want to do it again.

"They landed—four Indians—a stone's throw from where I crouched, chattering away in those dulcet tones they use when they are happy and feel perhaps a little more romantic than usual themselves. Soon they were digging in a sand dune well back from the lake *near me*. Ugh, I could hear them breathe, but I don't believe that my lungs performed the office of respiration for fifteen minutes. Into that hole they put this beaver along with some other things, and a black box. Then while I was trembling all the while lest they reconnoiter and discover me, they left hastily, and soon I could hear the sound of the paddle again.

"Now they say the beaver is caught by leading him to obey his sense of duty. The trappers just make a breach in the dam which the creatures have toilsomely built and there they hide their trap. As soon as they are gone the beavers rush to repair the hole. They say it's like using a baby's cry to draw its mother into an ambush. The steel jaws of the trap cruelly seize the faithful workers just as they are succeeding. The ruse has worked. And so in as much as I had been drawn into an ambush I felt that duty led me to mark the spot and in the morning repair to where the *cache* had been made.

"Very generously I left the black box and its papers, taking only this fur and some other trifles. But I can tell you, if you knew where all the buried Indian things are, you could quit rustling and live like princes the rest of your days."

"Will you not be afraid to return here again," suggested Clermont.

"Oh, I've done with coming out here anyhow. To my notion this whole country is overdone. You never can make much out of these parts.

"Is there no society here?" drawled Buhl-Bysee, who had laughed to himself over the "ON" and the "GUN." The story was either tiresome to him, or else he wished to draw attention from the subject of the box.

"We have some ladies here to-night," said Clermont.

"Oh, yes, of course," replied the latest comer, looking around contemptuously, "but I mean anybody of note or accomplishments?"

"They say that Catherine Dale, who painted that rage of "*Les Garçons*, is here, or was rather, but has gone out to live with the Indians away from Fort Dearborn," said the owner of the beaver.



## Ongon

"Fort Dearborn isn't here," growled Buhl-Bysee, "it's sixty miles away from here."

"Haven't bought here, partner, have you?"

The laugh at Buhl-Bysee's expense led him to reveal himself in all his importance, and Clermont, who had started at the mention of the name of Catherine Dale, was covering his momentary confusion by asking Buhl-Bysee to repeat just what he had said.

"I am one of the commissioners of the United States authorized to make a treaty with the Indians looking to their removal west of the Mississippi," said Buhl-Bysee, obligingly.

Thereupon Clermont engaged the commissioner in a conversation that repeatedly made the bush outside sway as if shaken by the wind. Clermont seemed impressed by the grandeur of Buhl-Bysee, and both advanced his own opinions with diffidence, and permitted himself to be overridden with great meekness.

"The government is making history and should take care, should it not, to leave no taint of dishonor on this transaction?" suggested Clermont.

"May be so," drawled the commissioner, smacking his lips and adding to the contents of his mouth, "but we must open up the land for the settlers."

"Honorably, let us hope," ventured the other.

"By extinguishing the titles of the Indians," replied the agent.

"I mean in a way creditable to our countrymen." Clermont's question contained its own request for pardon if irritating.

"In the most expeditious way possible; it's a thing we've got to get done and that in a hurry," plumped Buhl-Bysee.

"Ah, but I saw yesterday at Detroit a schooner leave for Chicago, its holds filled with barrels of whiskey." The voice asked to be set right on what it saw.

"Of course, they'll have it anyhow, the Indians are easier to treat with when supplied with liquor," sneered Buhl-Bysee.

"But does not that seem to be making them drunk in order to get their five million acres for a song?" asked Clermont.

"We'll make them drunk to give them a good time, my friend," said the agent, who would have done with the subject, now that his importance was made apparent to them all. "To be brief and to the point with you, sir, my government intends that the Indians shall be removed west of the Mississippi. If it must be done by force of arms, why"—he laughed coarsely—"we have Major Trenton at hand, I believe. But if by treaty peaceably, so much the better. However, since their going is not a debatable question, therefore a flow of liquor is better than a flow of blood."

## Weird Figures

Had Lusette not retired from the window, a twig of the bush might have been seen feeling for the pistol at the shadow of its girth. But the gust of anger gave place to discretion, and, the conversation being ended, the whole migratory shrub moved off over the barren waste into the darkness.

### III

#### WEIRD FIGURES

When at a safe distance from the inn the Indian arose and pushed out with rapid strides in a direction away from the lake. Once on his pony, which he had tied to more than an imaginary bush, the miles flew beneath his feet, until a distant light glimmered suddenly on the horizon like a star of low magnitude. Towards this horse and rider sped with common will, the powerful beast stretching his legs in the night until soon, like the opening of the telescope, he had brought the star into a flaming world.

The Indian's fingers were extended and moved sharply down in front of the eyes of his pony. Before that obedient creature could halt his master was upon the ground. A long, plaintive call of woe, like the moan of the screech-owl, fled from the lips of the chief.

Then he stood with his arms folded and leaning upon the neck of his horse—waiting the response.

The cry seemed to have smothered the fire-world toward which both man and beast were looking intently.

But only for a minute. The fresh wood thrown upon the blaze in answer to the call of the young chief soon caught the spirit of the flame and now fantastic figures were dancing in the sky as the fire darted heavenward.

Watching the effect for a few brief moments the rider was again on the back of his pony. Again the furious ride was on, the faithful beast striking the trail as readily and with as sure a foot as if it were noon-time on a broad highway.

Now figures yet more weird than the flashes of the blaze against the sky! Like the mad fantasies of the imagination in a strange, wild dream, a band of Indians, frenzied by the communication sent forward in the owl-call of the advancing chief, were circling the fire in frantic measures through the terrible furies of the death leap.

An enemy must die to-night!—"High-key!—High-key!—blur!—blur!—blur!" the revengeful intonations of the quick gutturals seemed to say. At least passion could not be pitched to a higher key, nor mind be void of aught save hate.

## Ogon

No need for a hand to hold the bridleless pony of the young chief as he flung himself into the wild circle. Now by the rumbling and gestures which went the rounds from lip to lip, and from hand to hand, and by the fiendish contortions of the red men's faces it could be seen that the story the chief had told had been understood. They knew all their fate from the agent's own tale in the light of their own chief's exquisite revulsion.

"Ne-gau nis-sau!—ne-gau nis-sau!  
Kitchi-mau-li sau!—ne-gau nis-sau!"  
"I will kill!—I will kill!—  
The American I will kill!"

But the band of thirty now breathing out in direct words their purpose was too small—their ponies must join in the death leap!

Quickly the horses were as their masters. Wonderful creatures!—were they the spirits of dead chieftains, that their response was so eager, that their nostrils sniffed such blood, that their limbs trembled with such vehemence? On the galop reeled—faster!—faster!

Hark! What strange note was that the warriors heard among themselves? Somebody with them, but not of them! Had they been so wrapped in a flame of rage as to have been insensible to the approach of a spirit foreign to their purpose?

Again the shrill cry of warning, of pleading forbiddance, of noble daring!

Like the halt of doomsday, when all earth's orgies shall stop short of execution, the horses reared on their haunches and the circle had become a mass of savages.

There stood the intruder—on the back of her horse!—Close by the fire, that leaped up fiercely to betray her presence, an Indian girl, as motionless as her pony, her face of wonderful strength and beauty illuminated by other light than that of the burning wood.

"You shall not slay the white men" came the soft clear words like a whisper unfolding.

"What! Minnetonka, you here?" It was the chief's voice who rode from the mass toward the fire.

"Wautoma! Wautoma!"—all the plaintive beseeching whose resistless power had brought the death-whirl to so abrupt a halt was intensified in the outcry.

"Well, sister?"

"Minnetonka knows the fire in your breasts; she understands the redman's love for his native fields; she gives her heart to beat with their sorrow."

## Weird Figures

And they knew the princess' words were so. Her eyes were flaming, too, but with the master-passion they had seen before.

"You do not well, my sister, the paleface intends our ruin," cried Wautoma bitterly.

At the mention of their enemies the band's rage was on fire again and the mass was once more a circle, grinding out its hate.

Only Wautoma stood within the wild human ring upon whose flaming figures the blaze was painting such passion. Thrown against the night what whirling silhouettes of maddened creatures on will-ing steeds they were! Even Minnetonka kept time, nodding her head with her brother's to the tune of the fearful clatter of hoofs. She waited her brother's signal for the circle to become a mass again.

"See, every one has halted towards the enemy," said Wautoma when at last he had brought up the pause.

But when the princess' flute-like voice caught the ear of the sav-ages its magnetism turned their eyes to hers.

"If your love for the lodge is greater than mine, go on. But if not, listen to my words, my brothers," she was speaking in their dialect. " 'I am an aged hemlock, my children,' my grandfather chieftan used to say, 'and the winds of seventy years have whistled through my branches and already I am dead at the top; yet my roots have always had the rains and the sun has returned every spring time. Use not Mitchemanito's name often, but believe that he created his children from his own heart and trust him.' Have our braves no desire to win, have the warriors of Wautoma no Ongon, no cross, no maple-leaf?"

"Ah, but the way is long, Minnetonka," cried her brother, "and the Father across the hills is going to move us beyond the Mississippi. That is the meaning of great council-fire to be lighted before the frosts return!"

"You do not know, my brother, we have always lived east of the Mississippi," spoke the girl in silvery tones of confidence.

"Nay, bad-agent said to-night at the white lodge we all must surely tear ourselves away—our going is not a talkable question."

"Must then the artist now perish and the picture never be finished?"

"Oh, Minnetonka!"

"But if you kill the white people——"

The mumblings of the warriors began to offer up their terrible beseeching to the Great Spirit for speedy revenge.

"Art thou false, dost thou love bad-agent?"

Barely were the words from the excited lips of one of the war-

## Ongon

riors when the hand of Wautoma was in his hair and the offender plucked from his horse.

"Touch him not, Wautoma," cried the girl, dismounting to share his disgrace, who had spoken against her. His shoulder quivered when her hand was laid gently upon it, but there was no fear of even death in the eye that met Wautoma's wrath stolidly.

"My brothers, not without reason you are beside yourselves to-night, but by the authority of this I command you to return home."

At the sight of the rude cross of gold fastened to a bit of white fur which she drew from her bosom a groan of disappointment arose from the band.

"Attend!" she had separated a brand from the fire. Thrice they must follow her about it, for in her hands the silver vial they knew so well. Upon the brand the powder is falling!—In the crimson light that talked back to the angry fire and turned aside its glare with a softer radiance the savages became other selves. With the gentle glowing a deep silence fell upon the group.

"Ongon," said the girl with a reverential wave of her hand over the sacred coals.

And at the sound of this mysterious word the deadly struggle of hate relaxed in the dark faces. Making sign of the cross and murmuring the name after her, one by one the redmen followed in the trail of the princess who, remounting her pony, led the way homeward.

On into the night, riding like the wind, tireless as nature and their faithful steeds, one driving line of human strength and frailty—led away from murderous passion, led by a woman with the cross in her bosom—sped the strange company, acknowledging as superior to their own fierce wills a being whose name the girl had breathed as tenderly and gratefully as a prayer—Ongon.

## IV

### PEBBLE PHILOSOPHY

If departure from a savage state is towards the power to construct and moves successfully in smaller circles, the next morning proved Craps to be civilized in advance of his surroundings.

At daybreak the presiding genius of the inn had gathered his first group into the only private sanctum about the tavern, a little boat on the lake.

Granted that an oak, tall and branching, but putting forth

## Pebble Philosophy

scarcely a leaf in the summer time, may be called handsome, so might Craps be considered a prepossessing man. Great strength bore him up, but something was gnawing at the roots of his life. At thirty-one for such a man to be planted as the landlord of an insignificant public house seemed like the transplantation of some noble tree from a happy estate to a rocky waste with goats for companions. He was a man who missed the laughter that had been in his life. Upon him was the lasting impress of the tenderest and gentlest touches society can give a man. Perhaps once he had been loved and admired, now, but for his strength he had been a desolate man.

This is not to say that any one ever found Craps in an ill-humor. He was one of those men who entertain you while in their presence, and afterwards leave the impression that fate had been kinder to have placed worthiness in a better environment.

Therefore it was that before the morning and other breezes had set in to disturb the calm the host received the reports of his three servants and informed them cheerfully that it was always a fortunate thing to have an oversupply of guests to balance an under-supply of provisions.

"Why not cut your pastry according to your people?" he inquired after listening to sundry complaints.

That he shared their distress at having to serve a mean repast to distinguished but crowding guests was evident from his gestures. He might then and there have lost his domestic helpers but for his fingers. When he had made a V of the first and second fingers of his hand to represent the cut of pastry, and from spreading the fingers as far apart as possible had brought them back, with a graphic smile, to the normal and medium distance of nearly an inch, every servant of them saw that the opportunity of his life confronted him. They had enough bread in the house to give every man one piece. If they cut it into straws, instead of a hundred complaints every guest would take in the situation at once and supply his hunger out of his humor. And tip the waiters for their brightness!

"That's it," said Craps, observing the cloud departing from the brows of his one maid and two men servants. "We will give them a collation of good cheer, that will be good business."

A bright pebble had caught his eye in the bottom of the boat. "You see it is this way with life on the domestic side," he continued, tossing the stone into the smooth waters—"there!" They watched the rings in the water grow wider and wider, and the landlord's face broader. "There you see the lesser circle creates and includes the greatest, giving us the moral that if we put intelligent force into

## Ongon

the victuals they will expand to reach the last particle of all hunger."

The moral, which the Irishman among them and leader of the domestic strike now blandly presumed to call a swell thing, was to have an immediate demonstration, if the strides of the angular looking guest approaching them argued anything.

"My name is Castor, and I have lost my husband," began the voice with terrors in it, "and there is such a crowd in there——"

"Ah, ma'am," interrupted Craps sympathetically, "a crowd may be so dense that a friend may be in it within arm's reach and yet be hidden from view, from which it follows that a man may be lost in a room less than five feet square, unless he is pretty tall, or the others pretty short, or he is on a platform, or—but I will try to find your husband if——"

"My husband for three years has been beyond the torments of this world, I give you to understand," snapped the fiery widow; "and if ever you get to the blessed place to which he has gone there will have to be a mighty change in a hurry in the way you keep lodging house, I can tell you!"

Crap's attendants expected the wink from their superior, but a figure in the doorway had caught his eye, which softened as he said half to himself, looking out over the waters, "This is the anniversary of the day she died who was to have been my wife."

"It was a merciful providence," returned Mrs. Castor, glad to be given a stone to fling that once had cut, "you're a bad man and you have drawn all the wicked men of the country out here!"

"The pioneer instinct is a thread that strings together strange beads," admitted Craps.

"To be dangled about one's ears all night with their profanity," retorted Mrs. Castor; "may the merciful powers preserve me from ever spending another day in such a place!"

"Out here we generally come to embrace what at first we cry out most against," said Craps, pitifully; "you'd thrive ma'am at the head of a boarding house."

It was evident to the landlord that the widow had come West to thrive on limited means, and he had thrown in the pebble at a wise venture, for Mrs. Castor was moderated immediately to an impatient demand for an extra wash-basin, and some better excuse for towel-ing. She gave her family history and also what might be an outcry against what Craps had predicted she might be coming to in her finishing sentence.

"When my ancestors came over in the Mayflower they were all

## Pebble Philosophy

respectable men and women and knew each other intimately—but forbid the familiarity of these creatures!”

Having neither basin nor Pilgrim forefathers the spare host could only furnish a prospective landlady with a sample of the dry humor to be used in lieu of equipments: “Here madam,” his voice crackled cheerfully, “is our extra basin always ready, fresh, and full—all our aristocratic tourists prefer the lake.”

Craps’ finger pointed in two directions at the same time, to the visible proof in the form of a gentleman below them on the beach, and to the suppressed argument that, in this case, what was good for the gander was also good for the goose.

“Dear me, what a solitary spectacle!”

The reference was not to the lone female figure she should make on the shore, but a scornful cut of her eyes at the rude structure belonging to Craps in which she had actually passed a night of her sacred existence!

It was not a genteel-looking establishment, but Craps was wise enough to know when a taunt was a compliment. In the widow’s reference to what was his, she was actually considering him. Else why did she hold her bag so close to her body as if it contained sufficient capital for at least a wing to the inn?

“Do you think this will ever be a valuable site, Mr. Craps?” asked the widow in tones appropriate to the precious position of the bag.

“This, ma’am? This is the commercial hope of the State of Indiana. City is already surveyed and platted.”

Mrs. Castor’s scorn returned in spite of herself. She did not think that there was anything in the disposition of the waste of sand to prematurely betray the secret. He would be telling her next that it had a name, too.

“Yes, ma’am, we Indianians are philosophical, and far from taking affront at nature, particularly the lake for the dunes about here, we have decided to be grateful for what we have been given, and, in honor of the giver, have called it Michigan City.”

Left by Craps to ruminate upon the tenderness she was sure she had inspired in him, the widow’s thoughts were led still further away from the basin by the approach of the object which had caught the host’s eyes on her emerging from the doorway.

It was the young lady in brown whom she had seen come down in the morning, as she had seen her go up at night, with her face concealed by a heavy brown veil.

At home Mrs. Castor would have had unspeakable things to say



## Ongon

of such behavior, particularly as it had been impossible for her to engage the mysterious lady in conversation. Really that inability had been the last straw in the way from preventing Mrs. Castor's obedience to the stirring idea of a flight against the landlord.

But now that she had had it out with Craps and felt in with him, the more she contemplated the effectiveness of the girl's habit the more she was impressed with its desirability. It gave an air of mystery to woman, and her first husband had once said that it must have been some mysterious power in her that first appealed to his affections.

"In Rome do as the Romans do."

This remark, addressed to the sands that had begun their drifting ages before her Pilgrim ancestors had infused the migratory culture in her blood, explained why Mrs. Castor rode to Chicago behind three thicknesses of an old black veil.

## V

### THE GYPSY

If Buhl-Bysee had been a man of real depth or of some reading, he would have discovered, what most of his fellow guests had learned very quickly, who the gentleman was that played so quietly to his vanity. But the agent never had a friend. The fault was his, true, but his poverty could not have helped him to Goethe's thought which Jean had seen on one of the pages of the Museum the day before, and was now thinking out at the lake—"One who feels not love must learn to flatter, or he will never succeed." It would not be pleasant to go into the commissioner's mind except from curiosity, but so doing, something thus was his conception of the master detective: "Medium height, boyish face, age problematical. Hair chestnut. Like that wood looks as if, were he cleft straight along from head to foot, which would really take no great blow to accomplish, nothing but evenness and sameness of grain in this man throughout. Never could pass for mahogany, certainly would break under the strain of oak or pine. Chestnut wood is good for country rails, and this man, but for his clothing—neat, tasteful—looks able to keep the cows from running into the corn-fields. Looks as if he has always just stopped smiling."

Some words the visitor into the agent's mind would have supplied for the description thus given, but that is licensed privilege

## The Gypsy

since it is a debatable question whether man thinks with words at all, and Buhl-Bysee prided himself on being much of a man.

But Buhl-Bysee had forgotten to notice that Clermont seldom smiled at all. Laugh he sometimes did, heartily, always aloud. But a smile is no more a laugh than a sigh is a tear—though all are currents in one emotional stream.

Others were observing the strength in Clermont's hand when it pushed its way through the abundant, curly hair. But the time was to come when Buhl-Bysee would modify his judgment that here was a gentle, easily understood nature, endowed with good health to make up for the want of strong fiber; and yet was also to tell whether first appearances are altogether deceitful to any man.

Buhl-Bysee, on the other hand, was tall, and with a kind of handsomeness that will always command admirers when speech will not run before the figure. Athletic in build, perhaps forty years of age, with a turn of cruelty to an otherwise weak mouth, enforced by a strong but not heavy chin.

Somehow it made the host darker and his eyes sadder to look at Buhl-Bysee, when he was called out to the platform where the agent was waiting for the stage. But the agent was in good humor from Clermont's attention, and kept summoning into his face a peculiar smile which nobody ever saw that was not either won by it or else made it a study.

"Now wouldn't that be fetching, Bulbsy," said Craps to himself on being greeted with this engaging radiance; "really it's a new wrinkle now, as charming as the light we used to put into the pumpkin false-faces to amuse the children—but you don't come that on me, you know." Such a trend of thought, however, is degrading, and Craps struggled against it, meeting Buhl-Bysee with a simple business air.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere before, sir?" asked the agent, repeating the inquiry of the evening before.

"And haven't I seen you, sir?" answered Craps.

"Well, it's queer," said Buhl-Bysee, giving it up at last with the smile that undid Craps so bothersomely. "But you said Major Trenton passed this way yesterday?"

"Very early," was the reply.

"He must be a very high-spirited and gallant fellow," observed the agent.

"So every one thinks in these parts."

"Ha, ha—and the ladies, what think they of him?"

"Major Trenton is still unmarried, you know," answered the

## Ongon

landlord, putting his teeth to his lips, either as a host may do who has the thread of many topics to bite for his guests, or else as a man must who has the temper to say more than he will.

"So, so, still unmarried, you say—but had a romance once I believe?" said Buhl-Bysee with the cruelty in his lips.

"He was engaged to be married once to Miss Malita Strong, daughter of old Judge Strong, of New York; but the young woman became enamored of a man by the name of Bulbsy and broke her engagement."

"Yes," said Buhl-Bysee, putting one hand to his lips and supporting his elbow with the other, "I heard—and afterwards?"

"She broke her heart, for she married Bulbsy and lived just long enough to rue her bargain. Died, poor girl, at sea."

"And what became of Buhl—of Bulbsy?"

The commissioner looked searchingly, but the landlord was gazing upon the lake, whose waters had been suggested by reference to the sea.

"Bulbsy went abroad afterwards—that was five years ago—and became naturalized there, they say, though he has been back once."

Clermont had listened to the conversation with eyes of admiration for Craps, even remarking to himself aside that he must have this man. Now he interposed to ask the landlord who the veiled woman might be, walking along the shore.

"That's the gypsy," replied the host; "sure of it for all her disguise. One of the most beautiful of women, they say. See her contradictory walk. She is trying to be ungraceful when, ye gods, every line of her figure is crying out that to have to try to do it is a disgraceful shame!"

"You're pretty observing," said Buhl-Bysee, eying the landlord curiously.

"Not half so much as the scientist who fell in love with a handsome woman and wrote her the only scientific words on drapery I have ever read. It seems she had taken him out to a masquerade ball or something wherein she, too, as yonder girl, was cloaked from head to foot, in a sort of a long nightrobe coat. 'A heavy dress enveloping the form of woman from head to foot,' he said, 'is not to be likened to a rough box concealing the diamond. The gem, in order to betray its presence, needs a conspiracy of openings to receive and flash a ray of light; but grace of form does not wait on the laws of incidence and reflection, one step flashes the secret, and from being a mere garb of cloth utility, dress is transformed into a place in the fine arts.'"

## Clermont's Promise

"Your memory serves you well, sir," said Buhl-Bysee, still turning over in his mind where he had seen this man.

"I even think the scientist added that movement in a beautiful woman is to her beauty what fragrance is to the flower," said the host with a wink that made his eyes seem smaller when the commissioner was searching for his identity and looking into them as if he would find it there.

As to Jean herself, she had determined at last to meet Clermont, for she had learned from the nature of his inquiries made, however casually, that he had come West for professional reasons. He gathered that she wished to speak to him and hastened to her side.

### VI

#### CLERMONT'S PROMISE

Clermont was conscious in turning away with Jean that she forced him to take her stride; but he had learned long before that women of power have it intuitively to judge a man by his ability to keep step.

"There is more than one agent of the Government here." Her voice, though low and musical, had something of the huskiness of the morning in it that thrilled his ear.

"You have more knowledge than the commissioner possesses," replied Clermont, pushing his hand through his hair.

"Sir, I know that you are charged with a matter of life and death." She spoke in the same tone, but the words came faster, and with passion.

He did not answer, and she knew what she had said forbade a reply on his part. Her pause in the walk was so abrupt that the halt was not with him, but from him, and he went on several steps in company with his astonishment before he realized the pass.

When he had turned her veil was lifted and he beheld a face of singular beauty and power—that of a young girl scarcely twenty summers past.

He could not hide the fact that he was struck with sheer amazement.

The gypsy's lips were curled with a girlish sense of triumph at having taken the noted secret-service man so unawares.

Then he was lost in the magnetism of her voice and eyes.

"Mr. Clermont, you are a man proud of your record and justly credited for great ability in the affairs of your department."

He bowed his acknowledgment of the compliment.

## Ongon

"Will you let a girl make a request that may seem to cast reflection on your judgment? Sir, I remember when scarce in my teens reading a statement of yours that in the detective service a woman's mind is apt to be too willowy and emotional for use—and how a childish rage of resentment seized me because of it!"

She spoke with such a charm of girlish fascination, no man could have been offended at anything she could have said.

"A man will let one woman bend and break his stoutest ideas," said Clermont. "I should welcome the suggestion."

"It would not endanger your honor or compromise your standing with the authorities to promise me that, inasmuch as you are to use circumstantial evidence in the matter which brings you here, you will reserve the announcement of your decision one month after it is made." She did him the honor to be ablaze with the significance and high concession of such a promise. Her fingers played upon each other and toward him with such gentle entreaty.

His eyes grew large and inquiring at the sight of the plain gold band upon the third finger of her left hand. "You cannot mean that he is——"

He did not finish the sentence, but glanced from the ring to the beautiful face, so young and care free, yet with such a wealth of woman's strength in it.

"I am not his wife, nor is he a man whom I should ever marry, but his life is precious to me. And to you, Mr. Clermont, I can safely say that I am not married at all. But I must at least seem discreet, while you can play the fool and be wise."

With these words she dropped the veil again—by which action he knew that the thing of moment to her and for which she had sought the interview was his promise.

"I will be glad to please you in any way I can honorably," he said, eagerly; "I promise."

The hand she gave him quickly was like none other in the manner of its touch. It seemed to know the trustworthiness of his own, fluttering for a moment in his as if its owner yearned to rest from some great struggle—then a buoyancy from within her will and it was withdrawn. "I am Lusette for the present, which I admit is assumed. I cannot tell you my real name for it might bias and embarrass you. We shall not talk on the stage, and I leave at the Calumet, where I am in safe hands. Thank you, I trust that you shall find him innocent." No doubt of that innocency was in the soft, rich tones of her confidence.

Out from the distance on the clear air came the stirring cadence

## Clermont's Promise

of hurrying horse's feet. Then, keeping to the sand of the shore for his route, his pouches flying out like wings from the sides of his steed, the little Frenchman galloped past, hastening on to Chicago with the weekly mail from the East. Afterwards, as a freight train following the express on the same track, lumbered the incoming stage, the long blare of its horn starting into activity such of the tavern guests as were to be its passengers. High-ho! the travelers were in and the stage was off again, the great chains clanking, and the horn encouraging the fresh relay of horses to make a becoming exit. Craps bowed his appreciation to the driver, who cracked his whip merrily as if he felt himself every inch a Jehu and a gallant modern horseman combined. Then the journey was on.

A philosopher has remarked that if potatoes are put into a wagon and carted to market, the larger ones will always jolt to the top. Similarly, there is nothing like a long stage journey to bring to light the true size of people.

The keen and practised eye of Clermont would have discovered long before the journey was half over that she who had chosen the title of Lusette was no ordinary person, however young in years. It was more than that a veiled woman is a woman as truly as a woman is a veiled spirit. Clermont was ready to vow that versatility needs neither face nor utterance to declare its existence.

He knew that the girl read everybody like a book, that her eyes sparkled, though unseen, when oddities were passed on the way. He divined that she flashed a scorn upon Buhl-Bysee for what might have been an impertinence had he not found an innocent way to intercept it. Her wonderful vitality, however much it bestowed of its strength in making the other woman who dozed more comfortable, kept its own freshness undiminished. The sensitive play of the slender fingers alone would have told that. He knew, too, and his professional heart was not too grand to be indifferent to the charm of it, that he was communicated with in a hundred little way-side ways, by a lissome bending of her body, by a symphony of glance and Roman gesture of her forceful little thumb, by a gentle tapping of her foot when the stage stopped for another change of horses, and she saw that he was pleased with the enchanting song of a veery.

The sight of a soldier was like a headline to a newspaper to direct the travelers' attention to the local military affairs. Being 1833, Black-Hawk's raid of the year before became the theme, and with it mention of the hero of Dixon's Ferry, and Bureau Creek, and Wisconsin Heights, Major John Trenton. By the same law that

## Ongon

makes it more thrilling to talk of ghosts in dark the very loneliness of the country through which they were passing exalted the courage of the young soldier until he was an idol for the tedious hours.

"But after all he could have done nothing great without the help of Ongon."

The remark was from Buhl-Bysee, who seemed restive under the praise which was given on all sides to Major Trenton. Only Clermont observed the agitation of Lusette. But her self-control quieted the signs of emotional excitement in a moment. In this she was helped by the clasping and agreement of her hands, until Clermont was more charmed by her perfect stillness than he had been by the spell of her words and gestures. The outburst of Buhl-Bysee had the effect of terminating the conversation, for he did not explain, and few knew about Ongon. Thoughts were turned inward until the driver announced the approach to the Calumet.

Lusette had dismounted very quickly, scarcely touching the hand Clermont had extended to help her out. There was no one there to meet her, and he took several steps with her. "Thank you, once more, Mr. Clermont. The month will be dear to me. Till we meet again, good-bye." She did not hesitate which way to go and was lost in the woods almost immediately.

## VII

### PLAYING WITH THE STREAM

"Josie, what, it is Josie!"

Following the lead of the princess and their long shadows cast by the early sun, Wautoma and his bucks had forded the south branch of the Chicago River, when the sight of the girl on horseback drew his attention.

"Hughgh, she rides a strange pony with her hands full, and she flies!" cried the chief, "after her, all!"

The long night's ride on the bare backs of their steeds had not taken away the Indian's appetite for excitement. Surpassing the endurance of his pony is that of the redman himself.

"She's into the woods," yelled Wautoma in the dialect; "circle!"

But the girl was too sharp for that, for when they closed in again Josie was the same distance ahead, riding at full speed.

"Josie!"

But she answered by crashing along through the underbrush into the woods again.

"Circle!"

## Playing with the Stream

This time the horse was caught within the closing ring of pursuers, but Josie—the sly little fox—had escaped.

“Beautiful horse!” cried Wautoma, seizing the captured animal by the bridle. “Not Indian!”

“But a woman’s pony,” said Minnetonka, “and tired from much riding.”

“Take her to the lodge, Minnetonka, while we hunt for the girl,” said her brother.

But the princess, who had followed Josie more in protest than by desire, smiled.

“You will anger her, Wautoma,” she said, taking the bridle as it was offered.

“She must obey,” cried Wautoma.

“Not when she is just beginning to love,” smiled she.

“If she will not now, she will not ever,” returned the chief; “but Wautoma cannot argue—away and after her!” The command addressed to the bucks received instant alacrity, and Minnetonka was left to pet the beautiful horse and thence to lead him home with her. Broken twigs told the Indians that Josie had taken a course toward the river again. The party must divide—she had waded some distance in the stream.

“Ha, here!” Wautoma had found some turned leaves and was in hot pursuit in the direction of their trend. There is no sight keener than that of the redman on the trail of an object—he is Nature’s human hound, tracking by signs scarcely more visible to ordinary paleface eyes than could be the scent by which the dog pursues his game.

“What, Josie, where have you been?” The way had led back to the water again, and there the object of his quest was sitting on a projecting log, dangling her feet in a stream.

“You’ve been away all night, somewhere, Wautoma,” said the girl archly, not thinking it meet to give the account desired of her.

“Come, Josie, explain, what does this mean?” insisted the young chief, sharply; the anger was cutting into his voice.

“Oh, you are tired of my staying here already,” said the girl, making eddies with her feet.

“Josie, you know better.”

“But I don’t; Josie will go back to the Mississippi.”

“Where is that which you were carrying?” insisted the young chief.

“Where is that for which you rode sixty miles for nothing?” retorted the Indian maiden.



## Ongon

"Josie!"

"Yes, Wautoma?"

"You must take care!"

She answered him by a merry laugh and added her hands to the water. How she could sit there so lightly and bend over so far without falling into the stream was a problem of grace to even the irate chieftain's mind. Her long black hair played upon the surface of the river, but she had turned her head so that her eyes were dancing into his as brightly as the flickering sunlight through the leaves upon the water.

"Where did you get your horse, Josie?"

"I brought it with me when I came from the Sioux."

"No, this new horse?"

"I rode him for Lusette."

"Who is Lusette?"

"Josie mustn't tell."

"Wautoma will be angry."

"He is."

"But you must tell."

"I shall go back to my people."

"Minnetonka has taken the horse to the lodge."

"Josie would have taken the horse to the lodge."

"You don't care for me."

"I never said I did."

On both sides of the river the lines of Wautoma's followers, extending down at regular intervals to the bend, stood motionless beside their ponies—a splendid appeal to her maidenly vanity and good sense. But a savage belle remains true to the instincts of her sex—and plays with the stream again.

"Oh, Josie!"

Her hand replied with a tantalizing ripple on the water as she laughed aloud again.

"Why does the Dakotah maiden love war so?" murmured Wautoma.

Her lips were parted roguishly, her hand was laid softly across her throat. Wasn't he cutting off his own head with the question? "Where was Wautoma last night that he hates war so?" asked the girl, coyly.

"Oh, Josie!"

Now she would test his love for her and her own power over him—her woman's wit had found a way to protect the box. "Wautoma, you are not the only people whose duty it is to serve Ongon."

## The Painting

Think you Josie should hide anything from Wautoma that did not concern Ongon?"

Her voice—which she had pitched in a higher key for all the braves to hear—had such a ring of the truth in it, the chief was already looking the penitent savage for having doubted her.

"Now, for shame on you and your men!" shouted the girl; "if you are as brave and good as Josie thought you were, leave her at once!"

"And you will come for the picture to-day?" asked the chief.

"Josie will come in time for the picture."

They would return according to Wautoma's signals—by every buck of them riding grandly across the stream in front of the reviewing maiden. To accomplish this half had to ford the river twice, coming up behind the other half, the chief watching the effect upon the Dakotah maiden. Oft she smiled and nodded and almost permitted Wautoma to throw his blanket over her when it was done, how she turned it aside he never knew.

"For the Auxplaines River," commanded the chief, when Josie had jumped across the river from the end of the log.

The exhilaration of the ride of the night and the excitement of the morning had given vent to the superfluous energy of the savages and brushed from their faces the dark hatred of the evening before, leaving them bright as coppers newly from the mint.

"Josie holds her head high for Wautoma's band," was the cry that reached the chieftain as he passed out of sight.

And could the old trees of the forests whisper their secrets they could tell of chivalry as pretty as the legends in which the Indian himself has told his love—of gallant woodsmen who had come before Wautoma to catch their sweethearts by the stream! Yea, but if he could only do something great to show the Dakotah beautiful one his true passion for her!

But Josie had found the birchen canoe and putting in the precious box which had been at her feet in the stream with the rock upon it, she drew the papers from her bosom with the rings and all. Then she paddled quickly for Hardscrabble.

## VIII

### THE PAINTING

At the portage the merest wave of the chief's hand scattered the Indians as quickly and effectively as if the movement had been the tossing of pennies into the field. True a squirrel's chatter brought

## Ongon

a bobbing up of their heads again—but this was only the young chieftain's trying his power over his band. A sign, and he was alone with his sister, who had come to meet him.

If the ride had occupied two nights instead of one, Wautoma's face, too, might have shared the quiet of his braves; but in him the restless tide of passion still surged, and Minnetonka, discerning this, did not venture to speak to her brother, but led him into the long low structure of logs which they called the lodge.

When she paused it was before a painting of himself, nearly finished. In front of this she knelt with kindling eyes. Because the wild fire was in her face as she gazed upon the portrait and her bosom heaved with the terribleness of their common suffering, she held him in her master-passion. There is a savage desire in the breast of every brother to have his sister kneel before his idol. Let her but worship toward his ambition, and she may rule him. Thus had Minnetonka come to dominate her brother's life. Long he stood by her side, his arms folded, watching her face until she withdrew the cross of gold again from her bosom and was holding it beseechingly in the direction he was looking in the picture.

She had not told her brother that their Catherine was also sketching her for a painting of the Madonna. But in her purity and grace, and in the ineffable light that seemed to fall from above upon her perfectly oval face, and thence to pervade her being until it blended with the beauty of her soul, the thought of inferior race was lost, and Art might well be happy if the hand and eye of one of its servants was near to copy what nature had begotten.

The painting before which she was kneeling represented Wautoma in an attitude of noble defiance, challenging his right to hold a place in the American peerage, and scorning the greed of the whites as well as the vices of his own people. His kindred and his kindred's enemies together were striking the spark of grandeur in his mind with the glow spreading over his countenance. Aptly the artist was painting him in the fields with the trees and the old ruins of some primitive fort in the background.

Much of the passion in the brother and sister as they lingered before the portrait was due to the genius of the woman whose brush had caught the moment when cruelty was felt, and had enlarged upon the theme. Left to herself, with the same skill, Minnetonka would never have chosen the emotion Catherine Dale had drawn upon. There were softer times in her brother that she would have loved to keep for him. But when the cruelty was before her and she realized its truth it aroused a kindred feeling in her. Perhaps to

## The Painting

break away at last from the thralldom of its suggestions, Minnetonka looked up to her brother's face with a smile.

"Did Wautoma find that he could trust Josie?"

The young chief looked around at the blanket he had taken from his pony when going in search of Josie. He had not left it with her, neither had she sheltered under it. Minnetonka's fingers played upon his hand fondly.

"But she was proud of Wautoma's bucks," said the chief, putting the best construction on the unsuccessful wooing.

"Of course, and of Wautoma, too," said Minnetonka, proudly.

"Why did she run away at last then?"

"Did she?" asked the princess, taking the last thread of the encounter and drawing it cautiously with a sister's desire to hear the whole story.

"But cried out afterwards when Wautoma could not see her that she held her head high for his band."

"Did you let her do most of the talking, Wautoma?"

"She wouldn't talk."

"Perhaps you wanted to know most about the box?"

"Yes, the box."

"Did she know that you trusted her even when she could not tell you everything?"

"Ugh," said the chieftain, with a negative shake of the head.

"Then she will think you did not love her, brother. You must tell her that with your eyes and your words and your head held toward her goodness."

"Dakotahs are warriors," said Wautoma, tersely, not committing himself to accept any such advice.

"And you fought her? Oh, brother!"

"She fought me, Wautoma wanted to be peaceable."

"Tell me how she looked," said Minnetonka, rising and giving the picture an affectionate turn to show him how great he could look.

And then he told her all, and she gave him laughing advice. But when they spoke of her words about her mission for Ongon, and of the Lusette that owned the beautiful horse, they began to whisper confidences. It was, of course, a savagely soft thing for a brother to say, but his eyes spoke with his words, at last: "Sister princess, I love you, too; Wautoma wants a wife as good as Minnetonka."

Again they fell back to their contemplation of the picture. Their father's death, their mother's burial, their sense of loneliness until Ongon came—much in their natures wrapped them inseparably in

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their great sorrow. But for Ongon, looking at the painting, they had shuddered before it under the sense of impending doom.

"Wautoma goes and waits for the work to begin," the brother said at last. He felt as if the destiny of the picture was to make his race immortal. He must, therefore, prepare himself to tell the story eloquently, as one favored to represent his people.

The time had not yet come when they would wish the picture had never been painted. Now if Wautoma should have been called upon to die to save the portrait, scarcely could Minnetonka have desired him to flinch from the sacrifice. Not one scratch or harm must come to it.

"Yes, go, Wautoma, Catherine is almost ready, Josie will soon come."

But first they must look at the horse of Lusette again—how strong!—if Lusette served Ongon too! Then Wautoma's strides carried him from the lodge up the knoll to the site of the ancient palisades. There he halted and stood for more than an hour, motionless as a statue.

## IX

### CATHERINE REFUSES THE FLOWER

At last Wautoma's patience was to be rewarded, the artist was approaching accompanied by Josie. With many little ceremonies, and that dignity so beloved of the Indian, keeping step together though apart, and mumbling a weird Indian chant, the women drew near. The chant carried motion into Wautoma's limbs, for he, too, started in an outer circle, while the artist with Josie completed the inner winding. When he had resumed his place the picture and its frame were already placed beside the chairs in waiting for them. As the artist withdrew her cloak, for a moment Wautoma's lips were parted for gladness, and then he was looking at the portrait—a very provocation for Catherine Dale to fly to her work. After placing Josie where she could not catch the eye of the model, there was no occasion for the Indian to feel that he was the subject of an idle hour.

"There, Wautoma, a few more strokes and you will have made us famous!"

To fancy the Indian silent as the sphynx is to imagine that the child cannot talk from its shyness, that the bird cannot sing because it has lost its sunshine. Wautoma, secure in the sense of an appre-

## Catherine Refuses the Flower

ciative audience, was soon orator in three languages. To the artist painting away furiously on the picture, the young chief had been making his complaints in alternate French and English phrases; while at the same time his pose had not forbidden the use of the sign language in the communication of his feelings to the silent Josie. After once telling him by signs that Catherine did not wish her to talk to him, the Dakotah maiden had kept the mandate religiously.

A very contrast to the swart complexion of the Dakotahn who stood beside the easel, intent upon the work, though with a half dubious air about its value, was the face of the toiler, whose only points of color were her lips and eyes. But the pallor was emphasis in white of the same story told by the red lips and the flashing greenish-gray eyes—of twenty-six years of life whipped to intensity by hot, resistless blood. She was either not as pretty as she had been—which was the presumption, or as she was to be—a possibility. But nature had more than atoned for the severity cast upon a haughty face by the plentiful adornment of rich brown hair and by the elegance it had lavished upon her figure. Even on the wilds of the prairie frontier she had not grown careless of her dress, which, red, to please the Indians, followed the style immediately fore-running crinoline.

"Wautoma, you are sublimely fierce this morning. The great serpent is putting the very poison of his wrath into our work." Her voice was as her face, imperiously haughty.

But fierceness was not all the brush of Catherine Dale was dashing upon the canvas. The painting of the tall young savage, however much his handsome face was fired with Indian spirit, without paint and feathers, was a revelation of natural grace and strength. His legs, naked to the knee, were clean and shapely as if belonging to a polished bronze statue. Blacker than the straight black hair were the restless shining eyes that snapped with the same fierce energy cut like granite in the chin and burning in the lips. Artist and model were in complete sympathy with the spur of her words chosen with quick discernment of his thoughts. It was his life that she valued and interpreted for him, and, by drawing and sustaining the intense cast of his feeling, had reproduced at last. Now her smallest brush was striking the corner of the canvas the title she had given it: "The American Nobleman in the Ruins."

It was no idle whim, or mere passing fancy, nor yet the desire of fame that had moved Catherine Dale in her task. Her heart was knit to the hearts of the Indians by the strong cords of fate. Her

## Ongon

life had been a preparation for the painting—because she was a woman and had suffered wrongs of her own. As one who read her own history in her changeful eyes, and could not at all times at will hide from others the story of a disappointed life, she clung to the cause of the Indians. Among them by a strange providence she had found the place to drop the plummet line beneath common sorrows to find the more intense despair. This morning she had hung in her room at the lodge her motto, "I don't want a God who tells me to look at the maimed and blind and halt and be satisfied with my lot lest the bears come out of the woods and eat me up."

But just now, intent upon the finishing strokes, she had not seen the strained salute of Wautoma, nor heard the footsteps behind her, else she had not murmured aloud in French: "Oh, God, be neutral and I shall be satisfied!" Somewhere she had found these words and adopted them for her own covenant with Deity.

"May an intruder be pardoned?" asked a deep masculine voice.

Turning abruptly with a disdain born of the knowledge that he must have heard and perhaps understood her imprecation, Catherine Dale was confronted by the commanding figure of a young officer in uniform with cap and riding whip in hand. His distinguished bearing needed no explanation not found in the fearless, adventuresome eyes that met hers—this must be the Major Trenton.

She did not offer him entire the chair—the cushion was withdrawn. Anything less than a hard seat for a soldier would be effeminate! It was the action of the painter rather than the woman, tendering him, as she held the cushion quite at present arms, the most delicate tribute art could give to valor.

"I learned that the creator of *Les Garçons* was here, and came to thank her for her Parisian boys," said the soldier without taking the offered seat.

"Major Trenton, I believe?"

"Pardon me, I forgot, that is my name——"

"I fear Major Trenton will regret the journey." There was a fearless aim at her late passionate outburst in Catherine's words—and she was looking from him to the portrait.

He thought her very beautiful—the most present of any woman he had ever met, not even excepting the long ago. He surmised that he could be nothing to her because her sympathies were with the Indians. And yet nobody ever entered the presence of Catherine Dale without becoming a suitor at least for her favor—and at last, unless she or providence prevented it, for her affections.

"It is only a primrose plucked from our prairie," said Trenton,

## Catherine Refuses the Flower

whose tone and eye conveyed the parenthetical explanation that he understood her, "but may a rude soldier be bold to offer it?" He felt that it would have been no sin for him to have touched her, a very delicate sensation for the Indian fighter.

Her hand trembled as it moved a rejection of the flower, but her voice was haughty still when she replied, "Major Trenton, I may admire your courage, but we cannot be friends—we may even become foes."

The primrose held by the long stem drooped in Trenton's hand. He would have liked to put it in his button-hole with some remark that if they became foes he would enlist in her cause and fight against himself, but he was afraid of the results. It had been so long since he had had dealings with womankind, and he had only the dim sense that the words might sound like a thrust when he was rusty as such fencing. Accordingly he only smiled and dropped the flower—the most unpardonable thing he could have done before Catherine Dale.

"I have been fighting the Indians," said he with a little play of mock sorrow on his lips.

"Beware, Major Trenton, for you have intruded to the very door of the chieftain most hostile to you," said Catherine full-blooded against trifling in this, her supreme hour of revolt against a nation's cruelty.

Because he dreaded offense against her, he was taken for a coward, then he would show contempt for the Indian at his door—"Miss Dale, Indian chieftains to-day are such only in name. There are no chiefs here."

She answered by seizing her brush to underscore the title on her picture.

"*The American Nobleman*," said Trenton, reading aloud the words. "I have often heard it reported that the old chief's son was good-looking, and you have certainly idealized his anger."

"Is that all, Major Trenton?"

"I admire the picture and congratulate you on getting an Indian to pose for you. It is the first time in the history of painting, I doubt not."

"And——?"

He remembered the saying that when two people meet one is always conscious that he holds the advantage. Unless the unexpected should now happen, he could not hope to get away with credit—to go away and come back to begin right with her.

"And——?" she repeated.



## Ongon

He would fall into her hands gracefully—"You have followed a great thought in your conception of the theme."

"It is a suggestion for a statue for an American temple of Justice, Major Trenton," said Catherine, ironically.

There never was a man with a love for excitement that would pass by an opportunity of prolonging the splendor of an animated woman. Trenton was only a soldier and yielded. He would like to draw from her the full force pent up beyond the words she had spoken. Even though he saw Wautoma approaching to listen. There was the mumbling of an approaching storm within Catherine that would burst suddenly upon the slightest provocation, even as it had come unexpectedly upon her. Trenton was not strong enough to resist the temptation. He smiled again and folded his arms.

"Major Trenton, the American Indian ordered to design a national hall of justice would slightly alter the conventional statue that, fashioned in bronze or stone, has become a favorite pillar in such temples. Instead of the sameness of a blindfold covering both eyes of the goddess of justice, that bandage in perpetual stone should slip below on one cheek to reveal the squint in the trammelled eye. So, too, would tip the scales which the redman never saw balanced. And if the sword should be made to appear dripping with human blood, the nation should not quarrel with the Indian's carving in stone *that which has been cut out of his heart*. The central figure thus chiseled for the American palace of justice would present nothing of the appearance of an idle cartoon to be lightly laughed at, or to win the insolent guffaws of a superior race. Indian history is the record that a travesty on justice is a terrible thing. For, blinded with rage under the bitter sense of injustice, the redman has hurled himself upon his fate. Only to prove, alas, his strength unequal to his lot, and with all his cruelty, only to dash his own brains against the hard scales—yes, I will say it—against the hard scales of an inconsiderate destiny."

Before she had finished speaking a squirrel's call had begun in the same key, ominous, dreadful—hardly a gentle squirrel's bark at all, but carrying from tree to tree the same scornful irony—as with every yell a new head arose to offer its savage lips to project the sound. Every warrior's hand was upon the strings of his bow, and a score of arrows were piercing the disc of moss-covered bark thrown by Wautoma into the air. Passion following so soon upon thwarted vengeance was now waiting upon a woman's voice to command what in the night a woman had forbidden.

Trenton well knew that the Indian is most malignant when aware

## Catherine Refuses the Flower

that the foe is completely in his power. But, though he was conscious of the very moment when the situation had passed from the control of the artist, he stood impassive with folded arms. Not a muscle moved in his face or body, and the young warriors who had never seen the superb self-control of this officer now became awed to caution by his apparent indifference to his fate.

Catherine Dale, again no longer the woman but the artist, gloried in the exhibition before her, half-forgiving Trenton for his splendid nerve. Unconscious of the real depth and purpose in the mind of the savages, and unacquainted with the language of their gestures, her face glowed with enthusiasm in the presence of such action. Her eager form was bent forward with Spartan grace to catch the sound of their voices, and to note the fierceness of their wrath. Once she looked at the picture as if she was sorry this had not occurred before she had finished her conception.

She was the type that could die with splendid animation, if only she might look upon herself the while to detect the ways of the passion of death.

Was Trenton mad that he permitted the orgies of that dance unmoved? Why had he waited even until the last savage had come up—until every one of the demons' arrows was ready for the silent flight of death? Who could find his lone grave on a boundless prairie? On they leaped and gnashed, closer, closer—fiendish, yelling slaves of rage, watching for the slightest movement of Wautoma's hand. At last the preliminary sign had been given with the direction that no one should hurt the painting. The fingers of the savage hands were upon the strings, in a moment——

Quick as the flash of a bird on wing, Trenton's arms had relaxed, and with a shout of triumph that rose above the Indians' yells, breaking their monotony in the middle, the officer had darted forward. Seizing the picture from the easel, he plunged down the knoll toward his horse, swaying his body from side to side with the painting as a shield—not an arrow following, not a redman near enough to overtake him, not a horse so fleet as his charger once he had leaped upon his back.

"Now, Tom, show them your head and then your heels!"

Keeping the picture between their arrows and his wheeling horse, the soldier gave loose rein to the intelligent steel, who, like his master, made one swing as of tearing through the savage band, then flung himself into the retreat. Only once was there a pause—when Trenton lifted the canvas as he rose in the stirrups and saluted Wautoma, the nearest pursuer.

# Ongon

## X

### THE RUBY

At sundown came a different band of Indians, gray clad, with fur-lined moccasins, and a maple leaf woven into the blouse with a white cross in the center. They kept to the woods along the branches of the river until dusk, when they separated, each still avoiding all settlers, and carrying a package with great care and awesome gravity.

Soon came the cry of the whip-poor-will answered by blinking red lights from out the packages. To an eye in the far distance, whether in the woods or on the prairie, dark fire-flies were seeking to pierce and open the night.

Within an hour every lantern had gathered about it a little group of redmen similarly clad. Then all were terrestrial comets with dark trailing bands behind. The circling movement was stealthily toward the portage.

"Hughgh!"

The lantern man had challenged the form of a woman who had crossed the trail in front of him. "Hughgh! hughgh!"

"In the spring the maple leaves return!" came in the Ojibway dialect from the hurrying figure that would not tarry or return.

"A friend! she is a friend!" sputtered from the head to the foot of the comet, as the low, musical notes of the fleeting woman came to the ear of the challenger, and her cry was passed along the line. Somebody in sympathy with themselves was on a mission of her own.

"Wouldst have the night-word?" She was crying, ready to give the pass, if they desired it.

"Hughgh! hughgh!" returned the leader, swinging his lantern.

"*O-n-g-o-n*," long and lovingly, sweeter and more triumphant than the beautiful swelling, melting song of the twilight veery, rose and fell her answer.

The voice was new to the chiefs, but the word involved in its cadence swept the savage breasts with a kindred pleasure. Not over the waters of Venice at eventide could a chorus from masculine throats have poured forth a richer melody than their deep responsive "Ongon."

"Lady!" The men had passed on, but Lusette was being pursued by a woman.

"Lady!" The voice was entreating and following when its first whisper was ignored.

## The Ruby

Lusette tarried by the hawthorns until her pursuer overtook her.

"And thou, too, dost know Ongon? Speak, fair lady!" said the Indian woman.

"Am I very near the house, do *you* know him?" asked Jean, with sudden unreserve.

"I am Minnetonka the princess; he will be with the chieftains to-night at their flag-room, but our lodge is near, come thou with me, fair lady."

"I may not be fair lady," returned Jean with a girlish laugh.

"Oh, yes, thy voice is beautiful," said Minnetonka; "I know not why, but it thrills me, and when I heard, standing in the door, I must fly toward thee."

Jean suffered herself to be led by Minnetonka, and when they were within the lodge and her cloak fell from her face, lo, she was fair indeed!

"Oh, I love thee; I must call the artist—and dost thou know Ongon?"

"Stay," entreated Jean, catching Minnetonka by the hand and holding her back gently, "I would rather not see any others to-night—some other time. But tell me what you know of Ongon."

She asked rather because she liked to hear the happy voice of the princess than as if she wanted to know a secret.

"He saved my father, he buried my father, he guides my brother, he has taught his sister, he is king of all the chiefs, and——"

"You love him," murmured Jean, clasping Minnetonka in a passionate embrace. "Your eyes have told me that you love him."

"He is my husband, I am his queen," said Minnetonka, softly, as Jean held her by the shoulders and gazed with lustrous pleasure into her eyes.

"Yes, I know," said Jean, dreamily.

They were both a tiptoe above the medium height, and Minnetonka, too, was lithe and slender, her figure suggesting both delicateness and strength. Her long raven hair was fastened prettily with a wisp of prairie grass, with a deft turn of myrtle upon the head. She was clad in a simple dress with a border of the daintiest, softest fur, and at the open throat was a double circle of red haws.

"Yes, yes, sweet, happy Minnetonka!" murmured Jean, slowly. It was not jealousy, there was sorrow in her voice—and yet she was not displeased. After all she looked as if she was glad it was just so.

"He is so great, so good," said Minnetonka.

## Ongon

Jean's eyes were beaming with a thought: "I have heard—show him to me, will you—the babe," she said in breaths.

"I will if thou wilt tell me thy name," answered Minnetonka, half playfully.

"Jean," replied the girl; "that is my real name, to others I must be known as Lusette—now let me see Mylo, please."

"How did you know his name?" asked Minnetonka in surprise.

"Oh, I am the gypsy, you know, and of course I had to learn that," laughed the girl. Then her face sobered. "How hard for you when they killed little Joseph!"

"Oh, fair lady, thou dost know all." Minnetonka buried her face in her hands, but there were no tears when she lifted her eyes again. "I will bring Mylo."

He was not yet asleep, and when brought was fairer of skin than his mother. Though she was not dark. Indeed, if the legend be true that the Indians are the descendants of the lost tribes of the Jews, Minnetonka might have been selected in evidence.

"Oh, darling little king, I, Jean, salute thee!" cried the girl gathering the child in her arms tenderly and covering his face with kisses. The child was not to take without giving. To him her hair, as lawless in its myriad wanderings as the little hand itself, was a charm of color and opportunity. The tears were in the girl's eyes for delight, while Minnetonka gazed in fascinated wonderment.

"You think you have seen me before?" asked Jean, still holding the babe.

"Yes, no, somewhere, your spirit, perhaps in a dream," replied the bewildered princess.

Jean noticed the changed form of address.

"Who would have believed that I should find my way here to-night!" cried the girl—adding suddenly, "Oh, mightn't I see him among the chiefs to-night? I know the pass, could you not get us present?" Her eyes danced from dark to light, as she gave back the babe, and repeated her entreaty with half-girlish, half-womanly fervor.

"I dare not," answered Minnetonka, "it would displease Ongon. Besides, though you have won my heart, I know not who you are."

"You are right—and I cannot tell you anything about myself now. Indeed, I must be going. I am the gypsy, that is all."

"Must you go, you are not afraid, are you even braver than Minnetonka?" asked the princess, disappointedly.

"See, he wants this pin, he shall have it!" said Jean quickly, withdrawing a large ruby stone in a scarf setting from the ribbon about

## Treacherous Cat's-paw

her throat. She gave it rather into the safer hand of the mother, adding, "You might tell Ongon that it was my mother's stone." Then she was gone.

### XI

#### TREACHEROUS CAT'S-PAW

When Jean left the lodge she had barely time to steal to the tangled hawthorns beneath the lindens before the last party of Indians on their way to the flag-room filed past. Each carried a long rod-like parcel in his hand, and they were stepping forward cautiously like tight-rope walkers practising for the fair.

"What Cat's-paw!" muttered the girl half-aloud as the leader shuffled ahead.

He was an older man than the rest with a bent form and a double-jointed action at the knees. This with his crooked nose and ugly little eyes made him a hideous sight to behold—yet even so, more sufferable to a sensitive mind provided only his parts would keep still. Each step seemed like the Fall of Man—every roll of his eyes a proof that there must be a place of perdition.

"He bodes nobody any good, how can Ongon——" but a new sight stopped Jean's thoughts as though they never had been—where had she seen that type before? The cause of the interruption that drove out Cat's-paw was a tall, finely built man with a strong, proud mouth.

They were passing so close to her that they brushed the end of the wild grapevine she had grasped to support her in her position. Surely some one would observe that the vine trembled more than mere reaction from their striking it would warrant! There! she had steadied herself. But in so doing had lost sight of an individual she certainly must have recognized.

Try as she could the tall chief who had passed after Cat's-paw haunted her mind—where had she felt that strange influence before? "Impossible, yes; so—Cat's-paw a traitor—that man was Buhl-By-see!" And the girl was upon her feet in an instant. She knew that they were going to the ruins and at the risk of her life she would hasten thither to intercept and expose the perfidy.

The red lanterns were casting a weird light upon the old fort when Jean dropped behind the hazel copse and gazed upon the solemn parade of the dark warriors. The ceremony of the redmen's marching, no longer in single file but by twos and fours, with the grand air upon their faces and the erect, martial spirit in their figures, ap-

## Ongon

pealed to her sense of grandeur. There was more than pomp in the stately marching—here was a race with a noble passion for what they did not themselves understand. They were more than children crying in the night, and with other language than a cry. Each was a poor undeveloped man-child with a capacity for work, if in the form of play; of unity, if around some great and good man as a center.

Jean soon rediscovered Buhl-Bysee among the Indians, and—could it be true—not far in the rear, the disguised Clermont, a sunny Indian revelling in the fantasies of the night! “If only he were called upon to carry on an extended conversation in Pottawatomie or Ojibway dialect, what a series of charming grunts they would be!”

His arrival put a new construction on Cat’s-paw’s treachery. While she could laugh at the thought of the predicament Clermont would be in, if discovered, there was no great need of alarm. The old chief had only wanted to make some money, perhaps. It would endanger the detective’s life and anger Cat’s-paw for nothing after all. And both could be of more service to her alive than dead.

No she must not expose Buhl-Bysee now. She must depart. However, she would stay to obtain just one glimpse of Ongon. How her heart fluttered at the thought. “Oh, Ongon, Ongon!”

Would he not almost know that she was there? She was gypsy enough, whatever else beside, to believe in the influence of mind over mind. When the vine fluttered in her hand just before, and she had wished Cat’s-paw to hurry on, had not they seemed to quicken their pace? And now when she wanted so much to see Ongon, would he not be drawn to the hazel copses by the very force of her desire, especially when it was *his* noble mind that should be touched by the sensible fluid in the air?

No, she could not remain, much as she wanted to behold him. She must not endanger his cause, or hurt Clermont. She could wait another time—she had waited thus long.

Poor child! she had been thinking it laboriously in hard sentences, and she was weeping now at the thought of having to go. It was almost too hard to turn away from him when he was approaching so near. She could see him in his kingliness if she waited—the beloved of whom she could well be proud!

“Oh, God, for answering my prayer,” and in her faith, not needing to ask for sight, she crept back to the thicket beneath the elms and stole away softly, the girl and the woman mingling tenderly in her thought of him whom they called king of the chiefs, her brother. When she could tell him the truth, in the pure moment of lifted condemnation, he would love her as one of heaven’s mes-

## In the Flag-room

sengers. Oh, there must be a place in his heart for her love, she would try to be to Ongon what the Creator had in thought when he designed sisterhood. She was glad others had tried to find her brother for her and had failed because the seeking had been pure joy to her; and Ongon should never know aught but the joy of brotherhood. When they were permitted first to meet on earth, he would then know how his sister Jean had discovered that he was alive, and alone with her aunt had traced him, believing in him from the first dark hour that had brought her the secret of the accusation against him. Certainly her lips should not be the first to tell him that he was under suspicion. Else she had waited for him at the ruins to throw herself into his arms and cry "Oh, my brother, my brother Ongon!" Nay, not now; she would wait and seek Clermont to give him the paper and tell him how the agent first came to hate Ongon. "Oh, Ongon, as thy sister goes hence, she prays that thy coming may be sacred to thy chiefs this night. Greeting, Jean leaves with every flower that meets thine eyes on the morrow."

## XII

### IN THE FLAG-ROOM

It is a common observation that while the Romans worshiped the idea of an all-powerful ruler the Greeks adored the perfect man. It might be said of the Indians that they have idolized their chiefs and obeyed their commands according as these rulers have approximated to their conception of the ideal man. The Indians themselves claim that their sign for chief means, "He rises above all others and stands solidly on the ground." Bravery in war, skill in hunting, generosity at home—these virtues have won savage homage. Many of the chiefs who have used their influence steadfastly for the promotion of the welfare of their people, often at great personal sacrifice, have exerted an almost unlimited patriarchal power over their bands. Therefore whole tribes were represented in the men who came to the flag-room this night.

The passage beneath the ruined palisades through which the Indians passed, when their maneuvers above were completed, led into halls that were built for chiefs alone. It was a great secret society which Clermont must understand before he went further. To the detective, and to Buhl-Bysee even with his purpose, the work which the redmen had accomplished underground was marvelous. Aside from the impenetrable nooks and hidings that lent a sense of



## Ongon

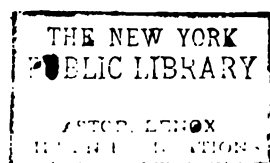
dark mystery and power to the approaches, the council-room itself would have commanded their admiration. Great oak pillars, polished and oiled, and now wreathed with garlands of wild flowers, supported a ceiling of cedar inlaid with grotesque figures in curious stones. Being hard by both the Desplaines and the Chicago rivers, by way of the former the canoes had brought the abundance of stone necessary for making the cemented cavern, while from the East had come shells from the ocean, fragrant woods from northern Michigan, bits of curios from old caverns of whose fairies and witches the Indian grandfathers for centuries had told the children at night. It was enough that over the cemented stone had been laid a flooring of scented woods smooth as the wax of the bees. But no, buffalo robes, with their dark-brown and their drab-brown splendor, shared the space on equal footing with gray rugs from the backs of the prairie wolves, black furs from the bears of the north, yellow sealskin beauties from Alaska.

"Indiapolitan profusion," murmured Clermont to himself, as he walked upon the soft luxuries that king's palaces might well covet, and yet realized how easily these had been gotten in the wilds of America by these Indian hunters.

But richer than the gathering of furs salted and dressed by the hand of Ongon, were the men he had won to himself by his personality. To Clermont all the Indian faces looked alike, but to the red-men assembled was the greater charm. They knew that one roof now sheltered representatives from distant and hostile tribes long separated by inveterate hatred. Here on common rugs from the common pipe Sac and Fox sat down to smoke with Sioux and Winnebago. The Miamis squatted with the Iroquois, the Pottawatomies with the Illinois, and, from the Far West, Crow and Ute reclined with the Navajo and Comanche.

Much ceremony and imperturbable gravity went the rounds while a sparkling liquor made from roots was dispensed, in place of strong drink, by boys, the sons of chiefs in variegated costumes. It was noticed that there was no general paint and few feathers to be seen. Had Cat's-paw played a trick on Buhl-Bysee and himself, thought the detective, that they were notable exceptions to the rule of feathers? Clermont resolved to be an early convert, and with the air of an agreeable, newly arrived young chief, he looked around and nodded grunts while removing the locality of the feathers from his head to his blouse.

Gently at first like the breath of sound across the waters, then swelling into a louder, happier euphony, broken at the point of in-





"ONGON—STRONG AND FIERCE ELEMENTS HELD FAST BY A  
MIGHTY SPIRIT WITH A GREAT PURPOSE."

## In the Flag-room

tensity into the rhythmical notes of an inspiring chant, the Indians were demonstrating their power in music. It was some national air Ongon had taught them, for presently hidden doors opened in the walls, and a body of white-clad cross-men, walking with august precision, advanced, carrying royal banners. Cut in the shape of maple leaves, all with a white cross in the center, some with the delicate color of the early spring foliage, others with the darker shades of summer's green, and still others with the beautiful tints of autumn, —they were the chosen emblems of the seasons of Indian life! Clermont would never have dreamed that forty flags could so beautify a room.

As the standard bearers were lined on either side of the way from the great entrance door to the throne in their midst, and the Indians arose to greet their chief king, a deeper patriotism than Clermont had ever felt took possession of him. At this moment he was proud to have been born in a land whose first Americans were Indians. He had sat in the galleries of state and national legislative halls, and had cheered the entrance of the nation's chief, but he now felt a deeper thrill of pleasure in anticipation of seeing this man who out of chaotic governments had constructed such a magnificent union of savage men. Verily the Indians were a foreign nation in the midst of a republic. How little the paleface knew of the aspirations in the woods of the frontier! No newspaper had ever been created to tell the story of the forest kingdom.

Another, more triumphant chant was beginning, and a deeper, more intense gravity was settling profoundly upon the features of the chiefs. Fortunately Clermont had observed his fellow moccasin-clad men were not going to give vent to their great feeling by applause. So would he veil his excitement under the muscles of his face. And what excitement it was! He could hear, he was certain, the silence after the chant! Now the maple banners were being crossed, the door was swinging, he was coming!

Unattended, robed in pure white fur of the finest peltries, with the maple-leaf and cross pendant from the chain of gold about his neck, his black intense eyes fixed upon the larger cross before the throne, he walked among them with firm but easy step. A man above six feet in height, of powerful but not unwieldy frame, with the passionate lips of the orator, but with the head of the profound thinker. His black hair was shorter than the average Indian's, but when he laid aside his robe, the same costume was his in common with the other chiefs. His face, perhaps because of his intense feeling, was a lighter cast of color than that of the men about him, but

## Ongon

it was Indian type, strong, and fierce elements held fast by a mighty spirit with a great purpose.

"In the spring the maple leaves return!" Every tongue seemed able to speak the watchword in English though afterward it was repeated in a dozen dialects before there was silence again.

It was a kingly moment, for nothing exceeds the majesty of a congregation of powerful men awaiting eagerly for a great leader's first word—unless it be that fascination of attention which follows when such high anticipation is not disappointed. And the chiefs of the nations needed not the white man's color or ways of expression to make known their satisfaction. By an ideal gravity, sometimes pensive, sometimes triumphant, sometimes chastened, but ever more and more royally transformed by contact with the speaker's mind, the conclave of warriors feasted upon the sound of Ongon's voice. They seemed content to rest in his heart. If Catherine Dale had painted Wautoma in such colors that he had towered in resentment against the paleface, now, under the influence of Ongon's words, the young chief fairly exulted in the descriptions of his superior, and lost himself in Ongon's ultimate hope for the redman. It was truth's hour of triumph over crude strength. Had Ongon once been guilty of some great sin against himself that he could lay hold upon such eternal verities?

Clermont was present to study the man, and yet he was conscious that soon he was being examined in return by looks that did not hang fire, but shot straight across the room and lingered not when they had gone through him. The detective also noticed that the eyes of all were upon Ongon gratefully. They knew nothing of the crime, that was certain. He was to them their chief-king back again from his long trip among the nations to meet them gathered from afar. He could not understand the Indian tongue in which Ongon spoke. Sometimes when the chief-king gazed above with a tremendous passionate outcry, it seemed to leave his lips like the hissing rise of the roman candle, but when it had spent itself in the night of their thought, a radiance burst upon his countenance compelling admiration for its happy light.

Ongon spoke with characteristic Indian brevity, while the speeches that followed were of even shorter duration. From the gestures of the orators Clermont judged that they were conferring upon the chief-king further authority. Now and then the word "council-fire," known to him, acquainted him with the fact that the action of the American government was under consideration. But the secret officer could read the faces with little more readiness than

## A Flash of Red Powder

he could understand the words. He was in the presence of the best and gravest of the chiefs who were past masters in the office of secrecy.

Then there was a slight diversion arranged for both the pleasure and the discipline of the Indians. Ongon had apparently adopted a plan under pressure to exhibit his skill to his delighted followers. On the whole Clermont thought that the form it took was as good as any other. He could reason out what had happened afterward. When the colors drooped it was the offenders who entered, perhaps in their chant naming their own misdemeanor. At least in this the detective had guessed truly.

### XIII

#### A FLASH OF RED POWDER

Among those to be temporarily degraded in rank was no less a person than the brother of Ongon's princess. "Wautoma has violated the laws of the flag-room by this day seeking the life of man. Let him not wear the maple cross for a month."

Other similar punishments were commanded by Ongon, and then ere the infliction, amidst profound silence, the door was opened leading to the ruins above. Any one of the guilty not desiring to submit to the discipline with a full purpose of newer obedience might leave the order of the cross in the maple leaf, and retire forever from the flag-room. None passed out of the door.

"Close and bring the fire," came from the lips of old Cat's-paw, chief of the day.

Helmet-shaped caps of tin with a round disk above like the top of a mortar-board hat were brought out. On the top of the disks little inverted cups—dunce caps they looked to Clermont. But when they were led away to the farther end of the room and Ongon taking his stand at the opposite extremity was given a rifle and the lights were put out, save one dim candle that permitted the heads of the guilty to be seen, the five men were supporting small red targets on their heads. It was a device by which, should the rifle ball carry true, a flash of red powder was to follow each shot. Simple as was the arrangement, the excitement of the suspense, with the charm of the light and the pleasure of witnessing superb markmanship, proved the most thrilling part of the ceremonies of the evening.

Five times as many rifles, successively handed Ongon, rang out with a startling report. Five times not a head of the guilty flinched.

## Ongon

And five times the red light threw its brief mystery about the heads of the kneeling Indians.

"There," whispered Buhl-Bysee to Cat's-paw, "you see how easy it was for him to do the deed. Do you still doubt it?"

The reply given the commissioner by Cat's-paw was not as significant as it was short and simple—"Humph!"

But it was the time agreed upon for their retiring from the room. That which was to follow was too sacred even for bribery. The old fox would shuffle them to the door before the lights were struck again.

### XIV

#### EYES AT THE WINDOW

The highest type of any race is sensitive to moods. If it were not so then nature, which is swept by the lights and shadows, the life and breath of the seasons, would present a creation surpassing man in sensibility. Only controlled, even depression becomes a human being as fragrance becomes the flower when crushed.

And Minnetonka could not drive from her heart the weight of sadness that had grown heavier with the hours. The very return of the season of a terrible bereavement makes the battle harder for cheerfulness. And it was just a year ago this day that the little Joseph was shot. But that was not why Minnetonka had the pistol in her hand, or knelt with the cross in the other all alone. If only Ongon would come soon. The vacant easel on which Wautoma's picture had rested so many days and nights made the loneliness more unbearable. She would go to the room of the artist and sit there again quietly at the foot of her bed. It did not disturb the sleeper. Ah, hark, his footsteps, he was coming!

*"I am returned, Minnetonka."*

*"I rejoice, Ongon."*

His duty to the nations had brought them many separations since the day he had come to her putting his two fingers side by side, and she had smiled and made them look like one, and he had proudly taken her to his own home. At first he used to go away on purpose every morning to come back just to hear her say so truly, "I rejoice, Ongon." But now with months away from her the pleasure was a hundred fold.

Together they bent over the little cradle of fragrant woods made by his hands. With their fingers intertwined they stood like children gazing upon the gift left at their door.

## Eyes at the Window

"Ongon," Minnetonka's hands were on the shoulders of her husband in the new way taught her by the gypsy, "Ongon."

"Yes, Minnetonka," drinking in the love-light in her eyes.

"Do I satisfy thee, Ongon?"

"Why does my princess ask the question?"

"Because thou hast come back from this journey troubled, and——"

"You tremble, my queen, has some ill befallen you?" He drew her gently from the cradle towards the window.

"I fell asleep to-night while waiting for thee and dreamed a rightful dream."

"Not of the little Joseph again?"

"Yes and more—oh, Ongon, if they should take thy life and——"

"Ah, my precious one, who could think of taking Ongon's life?"

"I dreamed of a strange tall man, who came with the rest, and found his way——"

"Stay, Minnetonka, not into our flag-room, did you dream?"

"Yes, Ongon."

"Was he given much to smiling?"

"Yes, and to looking at thee with evil eyes, when he thought thou wast not seeing."

"The same, I saw him in the council-room to-night!"

"And he was with Cat's-paw."

"Oh, Minnetonka!"

"And came away early, Ongon."

"But you tremble so, my princess!"

"And when I awoke——"

She threw her arms around his neck and sought to hold him to her.

"I am not going, Minnetonka, how strange you are to-night, you were never so before. I fear——"

"Nay, let me whisper it in thine ear, Ongon."

"Not here! Did you say it was here?"

"At this very window."

"He?"

"He, looking in upon me with evil in his eyes and tried the door. And, Ongon, I was tempted for thy sake to run for Wautoma's pistol. Which I did, my king, in anger I did."

"And then?"

"When I came back with the pistol he turned and smiled and looked to some one behind him——"

"Cat's-paw."



## Ongon

"I think so, nodded as if he were saying 'I told you so.' Oh, I did wrong, I do not understand it but some way I hurt thy cause then I know."

He pressed her to him silently.

"Ongon."

"Yes, my love."

"If anything should happen have I helped thee upward?"

"Upward, always, upward, Minnetonka."

"But if she could help thee more with her young strength and her beautiful ways——"

"Who help me, princess?"

"The queen, the beautiful Lusette."

"I know not Lusette, and you are my beautiful queen—ah, when they give me the title of chief-king, I only care for your sake, Minnetonka, mother of my babes, my life and my treasure."

"I know thy love is wonderful and yet that I am unworthy of thy heart of hearts; therefore, I will serve thee, I will be thy slave, but thou shalt be happy, all happy, my king Ongon."

"Who is this Lusette, Minnetonka, has she other name?"

"She hath, but I must not speak it to thee, Ongon, only to her."

"Soft, my child, many maidens look to thy husband for a brother's direction, but thou hast thine Ongon's heart sealed within thine own."

"Oh, Ongon, that is too much. I do not ask it of thee. Thou art greater than I, and I was wrong ever to think I could keep thee wholly to myself. Thou wert educated by the fathers in many tongues with much learning, but——"

She unloosed his clasp of her hand and glided to the cradle. Under the baby's robe she had placed the ruby and the pretty ribbon when Buhl-Bysee was peering through the window. "She left this for Mylo, Ongon."

He clasped it quickly in his hand and gazed upon it with strange eyes. His breath came faster as he turned it over and over. Then his head sank in his hand and she knew that he was thinking wildly. At such times and in such ways he was wont to penetrate to some proper course for keeping his chiefs faithful.

Gently her hand touched his forehead.

"Come, we will walk in the open air, my princess, we are feverish here, and the night has been hard for you."

Neither spoke as they walked hand in hand under the open stars. At the linden under which she had found Jean Minnetonka left the side of her husband for a little rising of the ground; there she stood

## Eyes at the Window

alone, with her face from him. He did not seek to follow her, for he knew that she was in prayer, and it is sacred with the Indian never to interrupt another in such devotions.

When she returned her face wore its usual calm and her voice was as of old, the spring was in her step, and she touched his hand lightly. "They cannot hurt you, Ongon, we can dance before their evil."

He knew so well her strength that he did not fear to tell her now—"There was another man with Cat's-paw to-night."

"Hush, not here, Ongon, there may be ears, you know. We will go in again."

"She had not shared the depths of his innermost life with trifling regard for its value. And whatever he was to the world she knew him in his kingliest moments and since she was at heart a queen, the nobleness of her nature rose in majesty to meet his own. Therefore he felt the sympathy and power in her step as they walked to the house. "I laughed at myself, Ongon, it was silly to fear for you, tell me, who seeks to know more of you and is aided by Cat's-paw?"

"A man of subtle power, a deep, wonderful man, whom many might pass by, but one who looks to read your soul, and lives, I believe, for deep work unto which he would sacrifice love and all his life."

"A man also colored by Cat's-paws arts?"

"Yes, white."

"Was he with the other—by his side?"

"No."

"Did they make signs or nod or seem to communicate with each other?"

"They seemed not to know each other, although the deep man often studied the tall man when he knew it not."

"Were they dressed alike?"

"Wautoma says that both had feathers at first, but not when I arrived."

"The evil one had the feathers."

"Yes."

"Then they are not friends, he would have told a friend the bad manners of feathers with us; you have nothing to fear concerning this one."

"I knew it, but I wanted to tell it too. Yet he was there to study me, Minnetonka, only for a righteous purpose I know."

" 'Tis well."

## Ongon

"Aye, while I live they cannot break down my influence with my men. It grows, it grows, oh, it is worth the while, Minnetonka!"

"If I should be taken from thee, thou must never let them go, Ongon. Thou alone hast the discernment to know our people's hearts. They may be *the sick men of America* to some, but when they have hope, with thy leadership, the Great Spirit shall not have created the Indians in vain."

"Yes, Minnetonka it is not I but the Breath-Master who guides them, and we are a strange people kept wisely by the spirit who preserves the nations."

The soul was in her eyes as she took his hands and thanked him for what she and he knew together his words meant.

"And, Ongon."

"Yes, Minnetonka."

"Thou must treasure sacredly the gift of the beautiful Lusette's love."

## XV

### A THRILLING ALTO

To John Trenton, in the woods skirting the way by the South Branch from Fort Dearborn to the Portage, the sound of a thrilling alto was more startling than would have been the singing of a dozen rifle balls——

"Have a care, Cat's-paw, or you will sink over your head!"

The old reprobate of an Indian, Cat's-paw, Trenton knew, but to whom belonged the voice vibrating with such pleading and warning? On his way to reconnoiter and, if possible, return the stolen picture, he who had wounded one woman's feelings might now atone for his offense by helping womankind in general.

He felt the reward of the virtuous was with him, for he could make his way where there were no dry leaves to crackle almost direct into the sunny opening. Only one clump of dense underbrush was massed between him and the voices. In this he could hide with all reasonable hope of concealment, and yet cast his eye upon the crooked old Indian and his machinations. Something like an old surface root of a big tree enabled him to almost slide along to the coveted spot.

Cat's-paw tent was the largest object, pitched amidst tinkling bobolinks, blackthroated dicksissels, and thrilling meadow larks upon a grassy carpet gemmed with buttercups and daisies, violets, and his

## A Thrilling Alto

flower of yesterday, the primrose. Cat's-paw himself, seated upon a backless chair bathing himself in the brilliant sunlight of the June morning, defied even the heavens to change him from what he was, a black spot upon the fair earth. He might smoke the air with his pipe, but it could not cleanse him with its breath. Trenton had never seen him so like a devil incarnate, which was saying a good deal. A little company was with the old Indian—and still others about him. Among the former—Trenton's eye would never have needed a second observation—was no less a person than Buhl-Bysee in Indian make up, sitting close beside Cat's-paw on a log! Near them, but not of them—interesting sight to behold!—were the artist and the girl Josie with Wautoma and two of his band—all on horseback.

Remembering the irony of Catherine Dale in her invective against the United States government for its injustice to the Indian, Trenton thought with a smile that, if she were only omniscient, she might now acknowledge that the scales were tipped the other way. He had no horse—they had five! But, he figured carefully, the Indian maid Josie's was an animal of the finest fettle, and he could slip her from the horse's back—or, if necessary, carry her along with him for a shield. Wise is the warrior who makes provision for a safe retreat! Soon he was aware that another woman was present, and directly he forgot himself and everything that might chance to happen in what was before him.

"You are too good looking a gypsy to be running about wild here——"

It was Buhl-Bysee venturing his insolence, as a girlish figure moved towards the rest with Josie smiling and Catherine Dale's eyes fixed upon her in the same animated way that had characterized her the day before when Wautoma's squirrels had whisked themselves and arrows from their hiding.

A moss-colored cloak from head to foot—its silver threads not half so bright nor so many as the dazzling lights upon a face in which, child though she was, the spiritual and the passionate blended in wondrous beauty and purity—so came Trenton's first vision of Jean.

Trenton had come upon events at their crisis. The girl was about to speak, or do, something very like herself, and the soldier could hear his heart beat in anticipation. Her hand was directing attention to where a thrush was engaged in bending the top of a tall lithe herb, with the skill of an archer, and darting from the bow like an arrow shot by its own thought—only to return each time with a low, plaintive note of dissatisfaction.

## Ongon

Before the observers had time to comprehend the action, and with a grace as dainty as the bird's, the gypsy had drawn a small pistol from the folds of her dress. Her hand, her eye, her aim, and the bullet, seemed to flash together and the herb was shattered to the ground.

As if its throat would burst with triumphant song the thrush had arched over the heads of the riders and was fluttering in the bosom of the gypsy. Lusette, erect and resolute as a queen, pressing the little songster to her heart with one hand while holding the still smoking pistol in the other, faced Buhl-Bysee as a girl confident of her ability to take care of herself. The flush of power had not faded from the face of the gypsy before the wondrous strength of her character had impressed itself with startling force upon all.

Trenton, half-fascinated into believing that this was not her pet bird, so instinct with commanding energy were the slender, pliant fingers, was wholly charmed. Catherine Dale, to whom art was all reality, and this superlative art, admitted no thought of preconcertion.

The songster had found the hand and together they were tenderly pressing against the cheek whose beautiful olive tint found something of a deeper response in the plumage of the bird. But its wings were tawny, while her hair was rich mahogany-red, with ringlets wild, lawless, and as profuse as the jubilant notes of the thrush's anthem.

"Who are you, dear strange girl!" Catherine Dale had dismounted to throw herself in ecstasy upon the gypsy. But Jean motioned her back and now was stooping to pick up a thread for other event.

As her fingers snapped and the thread pulled, Trenton began to feel the ground give way under him as if even the root of the tree upon which he lay was obeying the girl—and then he saw to his consternation a huge serpent glide from beneath him, hastening on with its glittering coils to wind itself about the slender form of the enchantress!

Not in all his eventful life of a quarter of a century had the soldier felt so comfortable and so uncomfortable both at once, considering himself, and so apprehensive concerning another.

But then and there he tore from himself the insidious winding thought—no this was not unworthy of such a girl, he would not have it! He would rather have had her thrill him with thrushes, but if she must use a serpent, she was a wise daughter of Eve! It never occurred to him to ask himself why he was defending this girl, he

## A Thrilling Alto

was too wholly absorbed in the fact. How he remembered it when it was too late to tell it to those who would best have loved to hear it said!

But it was not an excessive demonstration, for even Cat's-paw the snake was fearful of the huge constrictor and drew back when the girl stepped close to him. She was a witch, a sorceress, in league with the lower world to which he had allied himself, only she was mistress where he was slave.

"Have a care, Cat's-paw, or you will sink over your head," said the girl, repeating the words that fortunately had attracted Trenton's attention.

"Take this and keep still," must have been the whisper given the old chief by Buhl-Bysee, as he put into his hand a large piece of gold, after which a new current intercepted the fear of the chief who had grasped it with the avarice of a demon. The action seemed hidden to the eyes of all save those of Trenton.

"Lady Gypsy, me have told truth," muttered the old Indian.

"Beware of the devil, Cat's-paw," returned the girl twirling the head of the boa toward him.

"Me have——"—and another coin for his hand from Buhl-Bysee—"nothing more say, Lady Gypsy!"

"Suppose Mitchimanitou sends the snake upon you to-night," warned the gypsy.

The knees of the Indian miser shook in spite of himself with twice the ordinary shaking from their double-jointedness.

"Or to-morrow and next day?"

The little eyes of the old man closed to shut out the vivid reality.

"And wound his head around your neck."

It was cruel to scare a child into such a fit.

"Look at me Cat's-paw, the bird's have whispered to me your lies, and do you think that you can deceive the Father in Washington with your story, as you have deceived the Sauganash and Shau-bena?"

He did not answer and Trenton was amazed to discover from her next words that this gypsy girl knew Buhl-Bysee was there, and had the courage to scorn him to his face.

"Cat's-paw, listen,"—she petted the great serpent as if it were a thing of soft fur, and while she spoke the boa forked his tongue angrily at the chief—"you think, Cat's-paw, that the money of a man who is the commissioner of this country to the Indians, and yet so base as to paint himself at night and steal into the flag-room of the nation, and to visit you the next day to turn you by his ill-

## Ongon

gotten gains, you think that such an one can save you from the eye of the Father over the hills! But the birds shall whisper to the Father as to the gypsy, and where then shall you both be?"

"It's false," cried Buhl-Bysee, rising and sinking back again.

"You know that it is true, you are a painted paleface; think you Cat's-paw did not know that we knew that last night?" It was Wautoma who had dropped from his horse during the gypsy's ringing denunciation, and following her eye had read the face of Buhl-Bysee.

"Stop, remember your crossless leaf," returned Buhl-Bysee. It was not his words but something magnetic and indescribable in Jean that restrained the hand of Wautoma.

"Touch me," said Buhl-Bysee, taking advantage of the hesitation and imputing it to what he had said, "and Major Trenton's soldiers shall burn your lodge before morning."

The underbrush whence the serpent had glided shook behind the girl.

"Of course I was there last night, of course I shall come again, and I am here this morning to keep designing creatures from forcing Cat's-paw to perjury. Shame on you, gypsy, for undertaking to break down truthful testimony!" The agent gave Jean a look which could not hide its meaning. And Trenton who knew the arts of Buhl-Bysee understood it thrice distinctly. Who was a poor gypsy to withstand this man in the day of his opportunity? What might have happened then, Trenton could never have told, had not another Indian appeared riding rapidly towards the group. His message delivered in the ear of Cat's-paw his chief, and afterwards into that of Wautoma, seemed to tell of excitement worth their seeing.

"Come," said the old chief, rising with a gleam in his eye, "will you follow me?"

Evidently the call was to some distance, for a horse's blanket was brought for the old chief and another for Buhl-Bysee, and they were off; all except Josie who remained with the gypsy and her strange pets.

## XVI

### A MEETING OF EYES

Trenton felt that he had no right to linger in hiding, and, from the light upon Jean's countenance, no preparation to meet her immediately. She had taken a seat and was looking down upon the ground thoughtfully when he withdrew. Then he heard her voice,

## A Meeting of Eyes

but could not distinguish her words, for he had purposely retreated beyond the profanity of overhearing what she might have to say to the Indian girl after the terrible ordeal. He did not know how to explain the beautiful tenderness in her face as last he had seen it; but it moved him to feel that the whole world was more sacred in its design and agencies than he had ever dreamed. He had noticed that Josie, too, had stood in awe without interrupting the gypsy's thought. What love and sweet hunger was it that commingled in that face of faces? Why, when he murmured "God bless her," did he feel that only God could bless her? It was strange, stranger to him than life, that he, John Trenton, rough soldier, careless, indifferent fellow, who had not read his prayer-book for months, should have felt that he could have knelt with this girl and prayed Heaven for her cause. Was not her face a prayer as she sat on the log? "God answer her, Amen."

"Come, Josie," said Jean, softly, "let us go together to the Breath-Master."

The Indian maid was permitted to kiss her Lusette's forehead before she knelt at her side. It was only an expression the angels would have loved to make in this hour of supreme human affection. What had exalted Trenton, belonged to the intercommunication between two worlds.

"Father God," breathed Jean, holding Josie's hand, "help that we may never need to use the serpent again. Touch Cat's-paw for us; let him not destroy Ongon. Only in Thy strength is our strength. Teach us Thy meaning of our lives, for great love trembles before great mystery, and the hearts that belong to us are divided from us. Father God, love is a great loneliness. But Thou art at the threshold. Are others separated, wandering, cruelly accused, followed by love, wrapped in Thy love?—in Thy light let them see light. We thank Thee."

Indian arms about the form of the beautiful child of trust. She who was but fourteen wished almost to be as a mother in this human moment of her Lusette's yearning.

"Lusette, when Josie saw Ongon he was large mind and beautiful words, he will understand you." She knew how to pour into her mistress' ear the qualities that stilled by their own matchless presence the haste and unquiet. Not less is the charm of the way true prayer is answered than the reverence of its bequest. As Josie ministered unto Jean, they became almost inseparable in a strong faith and gentle gladness that gave them a power of oneness.

The serpent uncoiled, and languid upon the ground brought



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them out of the ideal world into the practical. They must take him back.

"Poor Coilie, if you were a horse we could pet you for your assistance, but there is no honest affection, no tie between reptile and human beings." Then Jean's eyes were lifted to observe the stranger advancing toward them.

It is a trifling thing to dwell upon that which is merely said in a first great meeting of two human beings. When yet no word has passed between man and woman, but images have been wrought from chance praise or accidental sight, there is a fragile path between them too delicate for the coarse steps of syllables. Perhaps it is the mind-light upon the face that strengthens but does not destroy the way; perhaps it is all that each has ever been; or, it may be, all that both are to be. There is no contradiction in a first glance, when none has been made by the lips. Afterward the way is paved for life.

"You are Major Trenton, I am sure," said Jean when he stood before them cap in hand.

"With a confession to make," answered the soldier, returning her courtesy with a military reverence. "I overheard—not just immediately now, for I went away when Cat's-paw took his leave—but when you used the reptile."

She followed his hand when he pointed to the serpent and took Josie's while waiting for him to complete what he might say.

"I—I almost feel like wanting to give a command"—he smiled, but the officer was in him—"that you never permit the snake to coil itself about you again."

"You have no right to do that," Jean bit her lips for saying it, but she stood straight to abide by the utterance. "I am not enlisted, you know."

"How is my name known?" he asked, wanting to inquire her own, but hesitating.

The pet thrush on the twig between them arched its head with a sidewise grace like her own. "What is it, Josie?" asked Jean.

He was so tall and her mistress so different from her usual self, the Indian maiden felt her first sense of jealousy. "This is that soldier who took the picture," she whispered.

"My maid tells me that you confessed and made proof of the name yesterday," said Jean, brushing the girl's face smooth with her hand.

"You like him," whispered the girl.

## A Meeting of Eyes

"That we must never tell a strange gentleman," instructed her mistress.

"But may I tell her that I brought this necklace for her thinking she was the artist's maid, whom I have offended?"

"You have found the way to her heart, Major Trenton," observed Jean, as the girl bounded forward for the pretty treasure of beads.

Josie had not taken them, however, without studying his face earnestly. She knew what it meant to receive the gift, and if it had been given in the spirit of bribery she would have scorned the offer. "I liked your picture in the magazine, we talked about you afterward, but Wautoma does not like you, why are you here?"

"Ah, now that you have challenged me, I can trust you, and you can help perhaps," said Trenton when the beads were in Josie's hands. "Several years ago Miss Dale, while engaged to be married to a gentleman in our secret service, painted a beautiful, sunny picture of Parisian boys that won deserved praise. I was led by that picture when abroad to take up some work in their behalf. Since returning to this country I have lost the spirit again. Perhaps shouldn't have known it"—he smiled that he was being so frank with them—"if her name had not been mentioned recently. The good that is once done, by woman at least, lives unto her. I shall always be grateful to the artist, though alas, she will never believe it now. But frankly, you have done me good—both of you, and being only a poor soldier, why should not I say it before I make another blunder?"

He had not talked with trifling words in his simple confession. Nor could he have pleased them better. They were sorry, Jean said, about the picture and he must think them acting very strangely, perhaps improperly.

"May not I be entrusted to help a little, I don't exactly fit in anywhere just now, and——"

"You don't exactly sympathize with the Indians," said Jean, half-playfully, half in earnest.

"Now—" Trenton hesitated for a name.

"Call me Lusette, please," said Jean.

"Now Lusette," said Trenton, his bow the very reverence of a soldier for woman, "would you undertake the contract to make me like the Indians?"

"He gave me the beads, he likes me," soliloquized the Dakotah maiden in simple confidence.

"There, Major Trenton, observe the way to a woman's heart,"

## Ongon

said Jean gaily, "you have only to cultivate Josie's acquaintance faithfully now to acquaint yourself with all our weaknesses and helplessnesses.

"If the Indian had confidence in me I could help him," said Trenton looking gratefully at Josie.

"We can help anybody so long as they have confidence in us, Major," said Jean, looking at him inquiringly, "but was there never a single Indian man who trusted you, not simply admired but trusted you?"

"Yes, one—Ongon," said Trenton after a moment. "But he has helped me rather than I him."

"Then you care for Ongon?"

Her eyes were so full of inquiry that had he been less occupied by the thought of the Indian leader he would have observed the delicate color coming and going in the face upturned to his."

"Lusette—it hardly seems right for me to be permitted to call you by your first name——"

"Go on, please, it is only my gypsy name, think of the L as part of mademoiselle and the name 'Usette'; you do care for Ongon?"

"He is the one man of any color who has ever profoundly moved me, save, perhaps one other dear friend," replied Trenton. Believe me, I have reason not only to admire and esteem him, but also to love him." It was a blunt soldier's way of speaking the words of affection for another man, but it went straight to more than Josie's heart.

"Yes, Major Trenton, you can help me, you can help Ongon." Her words were spoken with such tenderness for the chief-king, Trenton was startled. For a moment their eyes met, hers so full of heaven's blue, his so strong with mastered pain. He understood. Her life was bound up with Ongon—whom she loved better than herself.

She should never know how much it cost him to thank her for the privilege. It was enough that she knew that he spoke from the sincerity of his soul when he vowed, if necessary, to give his life to help Ongon. She saw the pain and kept her eyes upon his until she drove it from him.

"Then would you mind carrying my boa over to the water for me?" asked Jean, returning to her old playfulness. "Don't touch him though, if you are the least bit nervous."

Trenton picked up the constrictor as lightly as if it had been a thing of fur instead of iron muscle and reptile heart. And there he

## The Old Settler's Story

took his first lesson in a service that then seemed to make human life, once identified with the Indian's cause, a thing of mockery and hopeless despair.

### XVII

#### THE OLD SETTLER'S STORY

Mrs. Castor had a second talent wrapped in a possible landlady's napkin which, though not exactly befitting the profession and unmentioned indeed by Craps, occasionally distinguishes the mistress of a boarding house. She possessed the faculty of esteeming everything in the lodging house as being of it.

Wautoma's picture, in her eyes, would look better if brought down to the living room where all could see it.

"Major Trenton is so modest, hero, that he is," explained the widow to the people at the Forks, "that he would consider it a breach of propriety to even speak of his triumphs and trophies, much less show them—but now isn't this a beauty!"

Everybody admired the painting, of course.

"There, we will place it where it will greet the hero when he returns to-morrow," said Mrs. Castor with patriotic pride. "Pity he did not bring an easel along with him too."

"And we will have a hop in his honor with Mr. Beaubien, your landlord, to play the fiddle," added the old settler with a piping voice, "with Mr. Wright and Mr. Case."

"Dear me, sir, you must have been here a long time to know so many people by their names," remarked the widow to the early settler.

That worthy smiled beneath his makeup, but his face looked so sober to outsiders. It was Jean who, for the purpose of delivering the papers to Clermont had donned man's attire, and was present for supper at the Sauganash hotel.

"Comin' and goin', been here nigh onto three year," piped the old settler's voice. "In my time I have seen this settlement surveyed and growed from almost nothin'. Why since my comin', we have named the streets and made provision for a public levee along South Water street like other Western river villages, and we have erected a frame building for business purposes at Water and Dearborn streets in which we are packing and shipping hogs, until now we have a hundred souls in Chicago, and a reg'lar pony mail service oncet a week."

During the interval of this speech and the long delivery of a

## Ongon

suitable prophesy as to the future of the community to match its wonderful past, Buhl-Bysee sat behind his paper in a corner of the room. When unobserved,, his eyes rolled at the picture—and came back to him each time quickly. The manner was as if he were afraid lest his organs of vision should pop away from him and hit the picture, causing an explosion. Therefore, he kept them under control.

And the Indians will soon be gone from here," wound up the settler.

"Cat's-paw will do it," muttered Buhl-Bysee to himself, agreed at last upon a procedure.

The guests would have looked up had they understood the muttering, but there was no connection between the settler's and the agent's references to the redmen, save that they crossed each other in the same angle of time.

Buhl-Bysee had turned the page of his paper and was folding it as he did everything, the guests thought, so very neatly. How ordered his mind! Mrs. Castor had thought thrice already.

"Trenton will be compromised and gotten out of the way—it will be worth the while to get control of the picture—it's a way to Wautoma—I'll do it," continued Buhl-Bysee to himself.

Duty called him to the saddle, he explained, as he left the room; but he would be delighted to be at the hop to-morrow night when they complimented the Major on his picture.

"How gallantly Mr. Buhl-Bysee rides," observed Mrs. Castor, following him at the window.

"Yes, he's very proud of his horsemanship," said the old settler. "he never could forgive the man who should outstrip him in a race. And thereby hangs a tale, I'm told."

"Do tell it, sir," entreated Mrs. Castor.

"It is said that the Indians of various tribes in America have a confederation, with a leader whom they call chief-king. He is very handsome, I have heard it whispered by the camp-fires at night, and rides, as all Indians do, like the devil."

"Oh, sir, your language is——" interrupted Mrs. Castor.

"Quite necessary for Western purposes," said Jean in her disguise, truthfully; "but pardon me, ma'am, and I will try not to offend again. I meant to say that he rides like a streak of lightning, and Buhl-Bysee, didn't know it. If he had, his pride wouldn't a had its fall, more'n likely. The agent sorter had the fancy that this king, or chief, or king-chief, or whatever you call him, was too humble to have any go in him at all. Well, a couple of years ago, in some

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Western town, the Indians and government commission-errers got together to talk over the real-estate matters. They chose an open stretch where the squaws and their papooses could look on, and begun dickering on prices. Government thought land was cheap, Indians argued it was on a boom. Well, as I say, they got to powwowing and pelavering and arguing, when suddenly a shriek was heard across the field, and a wild, wounded buffalo came ragin' and tearin' through the camp of squaws. What a come-oshun it was!—a bull on the market, sure! But seein' the danger, the squaw of the king-chief—a young princess of great beauty and some darin' too of her own, had fearlessly directed the attention of the buffalo to herself. Buhl-Bysee was quickly ahorse with his gun in his hands, and a great chance for glory. But the princess' husband beat him down the field three lengths. The Indians never had a question of the outcome and cheered all the way. Half the way Buhl-Bysee thought they were applaudin' him, but tother half he knowed it was jeers they were a givin' him. What's more the young chief-king got in between Buhl-Bysee and the buffalo so that the agent could not shoot, and then the Indian coolly planted an arrow back of the foreshoulder of the animal with such force that it passed through the body and fell to the ground, other side. Oh, that ain't no yarn of mine, I've seed other fellers do that, it's the skill as much as the strength. Then the chief and his squaw joined hands pretty like and looked up at Buhl-Bysee and thanked him for his good intentions.

"How kind," cried Mrs. Castor.

"Yes, kind of exasperating. They say the come-o-shunner has never forgiven either to this day."

The piping voice had gained Clermont's attention from the first, as it desired. "Is that a likely story?" asked the detective.

"It's true head and tail, judge," nodded the narrator.

"How do you know, may I ask, if it does not seem impertinent?"

"Well, judge, I saw the buffalo myself the next day, to begin with," said the settler rubbing his palm on his knee. It was heavily bandaged. "That orter be a good end for a starter, I reckon?"

"Yes," said Clermont frankly.

"And here's the newspaper account of it in better words than mine, judge, for an affidavat, your honor," concluded the shrill voice.

"I confess that I, too, am run down in a hurry," said Clermont smiling; "might I have this paper—giving you security for its return—it shows a phase of Indian life worth keeping."

"Oh, keep it judge, it's nothin' to me I calkerlate, I have the story

## Ogon

poorty well in my head as it is, and you are welcome to the print of it. But my, it was a corker of a buffalo!"

Clermont thanked the settler for his readiness to part with the paper, and assured him of his own to do him a favor any time he could.

"It's a bargain, judge, I might get in a tight place sometime. Will you give it to me in writin' jess to show the folks at home?—Thank you."

Then Clermont would have engaged the settler in further graphics of his own about the Indians, but he must go now and milk his cows.

"Well," said the widow, "how awkward he do walk!"

"But he has a bright head on him," said Clermont.

Once in her canoe Jean unbandaged her hands and paddled swiftly down the South Branch. "First papers served personally on the old chap!" she murmured in the high key just to try it again.

Then the exhilaration of playing somebody else gave place to a feeling of reaction from the first brush with the mighty Clermont. "Poor gypsy heart, keep brave, after all a woman's mind may not be too emotional and willowy for use."

It was raining softly, but the sun was shining, and when Jean was far enough away to remove her settler's disguise and put it in the basket, her face was smiling through her tears.

## XVIII

### TREASURE TROVE

Hardscrabble, once Lee's Place, toward which Jean paddled, was four miles up the South Branch from Fort Dearborn. Its little cluster of cabins were occupied by French traders with their Indian wives and lively half-breed children. Intermarriage between the races, beside giving the Frenchmen faithful helpmeets, prevented a repetition of the scalping scene at Lee's Place on the 6th of April preceding the fatal 15th of August, 1812.

Three months before the events of these chapters Jean's canoe had first touched at Hardscrabble. She had come house hunting, she had said, and decided to take the vacant cabin of Chief Alexander Robinson. Then she had brought a beautiful lady like herself with darker face, but with quaint and pretty gypsy things that, in the eyes of the children, transformed the room, once trader's quarters, into a little paradise. Soon an awe of mystery surrounded the cabin of the newcomers. Strange things were brought at night

## Treasure Trove

by strange men who departed as silently as they came. One morning a small "lean-to" was added to the cabin. The half-breeds whispered it was a bear that growled inside of the addition. And their eyes looked big as they scampered away with thoughts too large for even Indian words.

But the gypsies did not live in utter isolation from their neighbors. When an afternoon was taken for some prairie festival or general sociability, her presence with the high-spirited Josie was frequently added to the company. She had raced with them, told them stories, and, greater than all, once had pitched a tent and had given them a gypsy afternoon when their fortunes had been told, with her sitting dressed like a queen and bowing and giving each a pretty necklace of beads and some candy.

The other lady—they heard the queen call her "Aunt Mary"—was full of good deeds when they were sick, and on Sunday afternoons read to them gathered about her interesting Bible stories. And they would sing together, leaning to pray. She smiled when the children called her "Hardscrabble Auntie," and sometimes she permitted them to peep upon the wonders of the "Gypsy Cabin." When Josie had brought the tin-box carefully wrapped in prairie-grass, they had come to the conclusion that each new parcel meant good things to eat, for Lusette's Aunt Hardscrabble had taken care to send them candy to satisfy their trooping eyes. It was a costly precedent to establish—and one that has needed a continuance in kind in that ward!—for now every curious bundle brought to the cabin was taken as a village blessing—the more so because never in vain.

The children were told by their parents that gypsies lived well because they had secret ways of making money into which they must never inquire. Perhaps Lusette was the daughter of a king, perhaps the queen herself.

If a bundle was taken away in a basket, it was always sure to come back larger than it had been to bring them the new good-thing or plaything.

Therefore when the canoe touched the bank with Jean and the basket of old settler's clothes covered with prairie flowers there was a wealth of welcome to gladden her heart. "Princess Gypsy, we waited for you," sang the chorus of happy voices, while strong arms drew out the canoe to its place on the grass.

Under the flowers was a box of toys and dolls—which receiving, the children had not thought that the Princess Gypsy hastened unusually fast into the cabin.



## Ongon

"Letters, 'Hardscrabble Aunt,' " cried the girl as the door closed and Jean bounded into the room to her aunt's arms. "I waited for the mail to be distributed into—Just promise not to betray the secret, and I will tell you!"

"Faithfully," said her aunt, smiling the confidence out of the girl.

"They took the letters, these feminine letters, your letters, out of the mail-pouch and put them into pigeon-holes made of men's old boots upon an old shelf among the groceries!"

"Yes, her aunt agreed with her, she was an old antiquarian to be always finding out such secrets!"

It had been the rule with them that only one at a time should have to wear the gypsy clothes. Then if interrupted, the other could hide behind the curtain until the visitor departed. And so before the two letters were given into their owner's hands the over-gown must be retired and she who had been called Aunt Mary and other things appeared as a tall, well dressed, handsome woman of perhaps forty-five, with black hair and dark, beautifully soft skin. She walked with the same quick strength that characterized her niece and carried an air of refinement that made the gypsy profession seem the stranger lot for both the women.

The rain settled for a soft, steady shower while Jean nestled on a stool at the feet of her aunt to hear the news. Winchester was the same as ever. Spring was bringing the green again to the Shenandoah Valley. There had been a marriage, with a gentleman from southern Virginia as best man, Mr. Harry Clermont. They ached to tell him that Miss Mary Devere and her niece were in the West, for he was en route, he said, for a summer in the West, near Chicago. But they had kept their promise religiously. The Opecquon was kept with flowers. They were missed by all, and must come home soon.

Cozily the two women rested back upon the past, as the letters, freighted with little details of old scenes and faces, gave their abundant cheer. Afterward Jean told of the experience of the day.

"Brave lady, never frightened when Jean is away," cried the girl, putting her face in her aunt's hands to brush back her hair, "and always believing."

"Not always, Jean, dear," protested her aunt honestly.

"Ever since our argument, and we proved certain things," said Jean smiling through a shower of tresses that fell in spite of her aunt's hands.

"Especially since the rings were found," acknowledged the elder.

"Come treasure-trove," cried the girl, springing to her feet and

## Treasure Trove

gliding to the box that had been found in the *cache*, "show us your dearness again!"

Underneath the magazines and notes written on strips of birchen bark in Ongon's hand was the desire of the women—an old envelope with two rings, one a wedding ring with the initials L. J. A. and the date 1809 inscribed, the other a tiny bit of golden circlet made for a babe's finger.

"Isn't it cunningly dear," murmured Jean softly, folding her hands reverently while her aunt held the little ring. She could not keep back the tears, however, that had been threatening their way for some reason all afternoon, and her aunt held her in her arms tenderly mingling her sympathy and her own silent grief.

"Ongon, Ongon, how I love him—oh, to be with Ongon!"

But it was sweet yearning without bitterness, and the pure color upon her cheeks was as if the delicate spirit of the flowers lifting their heads outside in the rain had hastened to touch her.

"You will be patient still, it will come, my darling," said her aunt when they had rested long in each other's arms. "Can we read Ongon's diary now?"

The record spoke of his desires for his people and was full of hope and strong faith. Only in one place did it mention anything disagreeable—the loss of an old, much prized necklace of shells, tiny shells, he said, with two letters beside, one from Major John Trenton, the other from W. B. Craps. The first of these, said the record, wishing to preserve the substance, described Trenton's meeting with certain Western chiefs and of the council that had gathered to hear him present Ongon's plans. "It was strange business for a soldier," Ongon marked the letter as having said, "but he enjoyed it immensely, rather as much as fighting." The second letter dated a year earlier, according to the record, had thanked Ongon for his kindness about some will the writer appeared to have drawn. Having lost these letters in some mysterious way, Ongon had taken pains to copy the heart of their contents. He only wished he could copy the necklace as easily.

"The loss of those things explain why Ongon had this box buried on the shore," said Jean's aunt as they replaced the treasures. "Your eyes are saying, my darling, that you want to recover the necklace, too."

"Yes," cried the girl with her full bouyancy, "I heard this Mr. Craps remark at the tavern that 'the greater plan may as well include the lesser.'" She had not finished, although she had paused.

"What else, dearie?"

## Ogon

"Do you know about Craps—isn't that an odd name?"

"Very."

"Well, if a woman wasn't so willowy she would very readily believe that Craps isn't that man's real name, nor tavern-keeping his final destination. But a woman cannot help out in such matters."

"Perhaps she alone of all beings can," replied Miss Devere, smiling.

Jean said she would if she had half the chance.

But her aunt remembered something else the girl had whispered, and she did not see how Jean could—in the way she had meant—give the landlord the needed impetus. Something, however, even by aunts, are thought not said. But how could she thoroughly know about the innermost Jean until she had walked longer in the new path?

## XIX

### OUT BY THE WINDOW AT ONE

"Cat's-paw, how old are you?" asked Buhl-Bysee when he had found the old chief and had given him a new string of gaudy beads.

"Sixty snows," answered the Indian.

"And you ought to be by right of your age and your father's service the chief-king of the Indians, Cat's-paw."

"Hush," cried the old miser, clutching a bead of red glass and looking around as if he had heard a beautiful voice.

"Ogon knows it," said Buhl-Bysee, coming close to the side of the squatted chief and adding a bit of gold to the fascinating string.

"Ugh, me not understand."

"I mean he knows he took what first belonged to you—and now the treasure of the flag-room, the gold and diamonds and wonderful riches that belong to the place he has hidden. He was tempted to take your place from you before the nations."

"Ogon not want gold. He good, berry good, not like Cat's-paw at all. Ogon good," said the chief, shaking his head.

"But you want to find that hidden gold," protested Buhl-Bysee.

"Oh, no, no," muttered the crouching Indian; but his denial was a request for more talk.

"Would you like a place in the people's heart?"

But Cat's-paw was not to be found by that tack. He was not there.

## Out By the Window at One

"You have four hundred braves, Cat's-paw."

"One hundred," corrected the chief, "Cat's-paw's village only one hundred braves."

"One hundred warriors are in Cat's-paw's village," continued the tempter, "and yet, with no warriors of his own, Ongon is king."

"Yes, so," agreed the Indian.

"And yet it has been hard for you to keep believing the truth. I am come to tell you more, Cat's-paw, to tell you all."

The Indian miser arose and leaped to his open chest. The bag of coin that he lifted was heavy, and when he had poured it out into the pan, the glass and gold and silver gleamed in profusion before his savage eyes. Each piece, large and small was figured, poised, examined with a gloating so loathsome that even Buhl-Bysee turned away from the picture of avarice in disgust.

"Cat's-paw listens," said the old chief at last, not tired of his possession, but like a spider, eager for fresher blood.

"Cat's-paw, Wautoma does not like Ongon. "

"Yes."

"No, he fears the office, but despises the king. Ongon is not true to the princess. Did you not see the gypsy to-day? Tell me, did she not plead for Ongon? You saw her eyes and heard her voice."

The crooked old form shivered and the miserable chief was vainly blinding his eyes with his hands.

"Humph, Cat's-paw is a woman, he is afraid," sneered Buhl-Bysee, "Cat's-paw afraid of a serpent."

But no, he was not shrinking from the serpent then, but from the thought that Ongon was not good. If that were true where would the flag-room be—where the hope of the nation? No, it was false.

"It is passed," growled the chief, "go on."

"Did you not see that she loves him—the gypsy—and lives for Ongon?"

"Go on," repeated the savage.

"Therefore she cannot hurt you, for the serpent only obeys the pure and good, and Ongon is married to the princess."

"It is so," agreed the old chief.

"And being so Wautoma will grow to hate Ongon—and serve you, Cat's-paw. You shall be chief-king, with all the treasure of the far off palace, and everybody shall serve you."

"Ugh!"

"Is it not so?"

"Now Cat's-paw tell you. He like gold, much gold, me gold

## Ongon

friend, me know it. Me like not Wautoma, you know it. Me want palace of far off riches, we know it. Me ugly, old, devilish Indian. Gypsy girl fine, good, serpent good, with her against me. Cat's-paw wicked, he awful wicked, but Ongon, he chief-king. Grand chief-king. He say, Cat's-paw, I want you, Ongon wants you. You be doorkeeper. Cat's-paw feel big, want good, want bad away. You come heap gold and fine necklaces, you tempt Cat's-paw. You give him drink, then Cat's-paw, he do what you say. Me not love bad agent, me believe Ongon good." Amidst all the struggle towards the light, the Indian had painted himself too faithfully. He had given Buhl-Bysee the secret of his life. Keep him away from drink, let Ongon's power be felt yet a little longer, and perhaps this misshapen wretch might come to die better than he had lived.

But the commissioner hesitated but a moment. In his pocket was a flask. In a flash it was above Cat's-paw's head. The old chief cowered as against himself, and shook his head imploringly. Once and again he pleaded miserably against the liquor. But the agent was determined upon the execution of his purpose. His strength overpowered the impotence of the savage and the assault was again committed upon the lips of the wretch. When the flask was half empty, the demon was in the old chief and of his own hands he seized and devoured the remainder of its contents.

"Everything shall serve you, Cat's-paw," said the agent when the chief smacked his lips and looked up.

"What can Cat's-paw do?" asked the savage with a hurried breath.

"The artist has painted a picture of Wautoma. Major Trenton has stolen it. You must have that picture. Wautoma must know that you have a belief afterwards that you can find it. He will follow you as a dog his master as long as he thinks you are on track of it."

"Picture where?" asked Cat's-paw hurriedly.

"In the village of Chicago at Wolf Point, at the Sauganash hotel," replied Buhl-Bysee distinctly.

"How we get it?" asked the chief.

"To-night Trenton is away at the Fort in talk with council of officers. You are out by the window at one, I find and give you the picture."

"Sure," nodded the old chief, "Cat's-paw is out by the window at the Sauganash at one."

# Nightingale of the Forest

## XX

### NIGHTINGALE OF THE FOREST

It was not so easy for John Trenton to meet Jean a second time. He was afraid of himself. The one hour in her presence had been as life to him, and afterwards he had dreamed too much. She had met him with her eyes. Somehow then he had felt that she had gone further than he. In walking through the woods to the river another nightingale of the forest had called to the gypsy's thrush, and its sweet "E-o-lie" had caused the girl to pause. The wealth of melody poured forth to each other by the songsters had lured a brown thrasher from its concealment in the thicket, tempting it almost to Lusette's feet. Its own throat was vibrating with a soft whispering, delicate and plaintive, addressed to the speck of sky above the trees rather than to the other birds. But, with the license of the forest, the whisper had soon become a lofty andante of song. Then Lusette had looked up to Trenton again and smiled, lifting her hand so gently that the bird was not frightened, and she had brought him to look at Josie. He had never really seen an Indian girl in the forest, but he now understood from Josie's heaving bosom and brilliant eyes how much the wild life meant to the savage heart. The thrasher was a little being of soul and power to the child of nature who had fallen to her knees and for the moment let go of her necklace of beads. What had Lusette meant when she met his eyes again? What appeal? What direction and motive to his life? She had been a wonderful creation of nature then, too, and together she had taken him infinite distances.

It was enough to make him fear himself. But he had felt the first thread in the web of fate had been drawn and he was to meet her to-day to hear from her lips the story of Ongon. Dispatching a courier from the fort where he had spent the night, he trusted that the note of apology and the information that the picture would be delivered to Wautoma at the Sauganash hotel would atone for his transgression, and then he set out for the appointed place of meeting.

The flowers that Jean held in her right hand as she greeted him did not bend with sweeter and more natural grace than her lissome body—with her left hand drawing even her gown into the courtesy. "Josie has the canoe ready, Major Trenton, we are both glad you have come," said Jean, decorating his officer's coat with nature's honorable mention while she spoke. "You are to sit sternly in the rear, sir, while the paddling is left to us women, after the Indian fashion."

## Ongon

He remarked that he was consumed with a driving passion to take his ease, but wouldn't they take him into an ambush when he had no arms? In spite of the ribbons he had brought Josie—possibly it was because of them—it was she who replied archly that once before he had not needed arms when there was something beautiful to seize.

"Wautoma will come for the picture to-day," said Trenton, explaining about his note. "But am I not to have even a paddle?"

"We are going a long distance, Major Trenton," said Jean, "and you would scarce know which direction to cast the stroke. The dawn of a thousand mornings was in her eyes until they fell, and then the long dark lashes trembled even while her lips were parted with a smile.

Josie was seated nearest him, and for the frank light in her eyes and her simple approval of his face, he was ready to sign a statement in his own blood never again to fight the Indians.

"You are in a Quaker mood, Major Trenton," said Jean over Josie's shoulders.

"Yes, I am going to renounce war," replied the soldier, "and like those peaceful people——" he paused abruptly and the smile departed from his lips.

"You mean you are half-inclined to give up your sword," suggested Jean.

"I've suddenly been convinced," said he in a graver tone, "that there are elements in the world which might have given adjustment to our lives."

"To *your* life?" asked Josie.

"Very vague and interesting, Major Trenton, I'm sure, though, you understand him completely, Josie," cried Jean persisting in laughing.

"Why does she laugh at me, Josie?" asked Trenton.

"She is feeling good, she always likes the gliding of the canoe on the water, and you did so talk as if you had given up," said the Dakotah maiden.

"Given what up?" asked Trenton.

"Yourself," replied the maid.

"There, Major Trenton," cried the gypsy, "you have the genius of all Indian philosophy, stoical contentment, sir, and—whatever comes—eternal hopefulness."

"Yesterday the Indian's hopelessness oppressed me," said Trenton, bluntly.

Neither answered him, but the grace of their movement as they

## The Gypsy's Secret

drove the canoe forward seemed to become newer animation at the initiative of the gypsy. Josie had caught her spirit, too, and the lines of their supple figures against the morning background of flowers and passing trees charmed him into his first entrance to the sweetest of all feelings—that every created form is man's to appreciate and enjoy. No words could have answered Trenton like the influence of this indescribable motion. It was just what the gypsy had called eternal hopefulness—come into white and red-brown beauty, with symmetry and the power of rhythm and laughter—that took possession of them and made them beings worth the while.

"I am already less a savage," murmured Trenton; "I am ready to go to school to the nature-loving Indian."

"And to Lusette," added the faithful Josie.

"And Lusette," repeated the soldier.

"But if this shouldn't last forever?" suggested Jean with a smile.

"It will last long enough," said Trenton desperately.

"Of course it will," said Josie.

Jean believed so, too, she said, and then it was her turn to be sober. "We are far enough not to be molested, and I can speak freely of Ongon."

### XXI

#### THE GYPSY'S SECRET

When the boat was brought to land where Jean had espied a paradise of shade and flowers, she did not seat herself at once with Trenton and Josie. It was plain to see that what she was about to say would cost her very much. Remaining still at the brink, she seized her dress between her thumb and fingers, making it taut in front as if about to ford a stream, and, standing at profile, turned her head dreamily and looked down at Trenton with parted lips. "I will tell," exclaimed the girl gliding to his side quickly, "let me read your palm, Major Soldier."

"It's a blank," said Trenton, as she took his hand in her fingers and bent over it with searching eyes that were now almost black with their intensity.

"Sir, why were you ever a soldier?" asked the gypsy suddenly.

"Aren't there any martial lines in my hand?" he murmured humbly.

"You have had trouble, and for years you have been trying to escape from yourself. You have possibilities all undeveloped—you



## Ongon

could have a splendid life, and yet you are not trying. Yes, you have been resolute in one thing, and have grown in good will. You don't hate as much as once, and—now I am ready to begin."

"Josie why did she make that study of my hand?" asked Trenton with his face turned away thoughtfully.

"She wanted to see whether you could bear the story and understand," answered the Indian girl, contemplating her own hand with curiosity.

"Josie, would you sing that "Thanks to the Maple" again—the Ota De None Neo Wata; sing it softly, please.

The chant was not unfamiliar to Trenton, and when, in the second stanza Jean's rich alto joined in the song, the soldier obeyed the nod of the gypsy's head, and found a place where he could mumble in bass. It did them good, making them feel near to each other, which gave the atmosphere Jean wanted.

"Major Trenton, I will not tell you now how many years I have known Ongon, nor enter very far back into his past. You are well acquainted with his aims and plans. He believes profoundly in the kingly office that he holds himself with great reluctance, and is persuaded that in time the problem of the Indian will be solved by leading the redmen to unfold what is in them. The Indians are, as you know, the most imaginative of people. Ignorance, and this wild, beautiful nature, with its playful streams and caroling birds, have prolonged the childhood of the American native. The Creator has also, I believe, Ongon believes, made the Indian less a slave to the mere getting of riches and empty honors, which alas, too occupies our own race.

"The Indian is a dreamer. Long ago Thomas Jefferson pointed out that the redman is gifted with powers in the sublime arts. He can draw, he is an orator, he had his book of legends before we dreamed of colonizing this western continent. But he will not be bent to our type of civilization. If time is given, whether now, under Ongon, whether much later, when the problem of the Indian has become less pressing, but more vital—as we grow toward the point of our own development—we shall meet the developing Indian at an angle on a higher plane where we shall be proud of him. Are not the Chinese slow? But you say the Indian does not care to make money like the Chinaman. True, neither does he care for the pig-tail. But Ongon found that the Indian, as a human being, was given strong, worthy instincts, and his watchword is 'wait'—so he works waiting."

"Oh, I believe the Indian will amount to something, too," said

## The Gypsy's Secret

Trenton in the brief hesitancy on the part of Jean. How strong her mind when the girl became woman and was thinking!

"As to Ongon," continued she, "he is not without his enemies. The fur-trade, profits of which he has diverted from greedy hands; the law that he has made forbidding whisky to members of the order of which he is the head, and his persevering honesty have brought him antagonism. When a man has once had to prove another dishonest in his dealings that other will try to retaliate by smirching the good character of the honest man. And so you do not know, Major Trenton, for as yet it is kept secret, that the government of the United States is to-day secretly investigating Ongon's history to prove or disprove a charge of murder that has been preferred against him."

"No, Lusette, you cannot mean it against Ongon, impossible!" Trenton had hurled the thought from him as he spurned the stone from his heel.

"A year ago his first child, a little one just beginning to creep, was ruthlessly shot in the field by a soldier for target practice, and——"

"I know that sort of a thing has been done," interrupted Trenton, savagely; "but Ongon never told me of this."

"No, he kept it secret fearing to excite the Indians, and that very fact has been taken as the first count against him. But a few days ago—no I have not finished my story, have I? Later that same week a subordinate officer of some popularity, and I believe innocent of the murder of the child, was missed at the barracks. Upon search he was found dead in a copse near the Calumet. His body showed signs of great violence. He had not died without a struggle.

"Cat's-paw has made the testimony that he saw Ongon throw away his pistol and run from the copse immediately after he heard a shot. A trace was made and Ongon's pistol was found empty with blood on the handle. Since then the detective has discovered other blood-stained things of Ongon's pointing to his guilt."

"How have you found out these things?" asked Trenton hoarsely.

"The government has sent a secret service man, the most noted detective of Virginia, to go over the evidence carefully. Just yesterday the murdered man's watch was found at the lodge, and Ongon's blouse, blood stained, concealed by his own hands in a cache."

"But you believe him innocent," said Trenton with studied calmness.

"I *know* that he is innocent," she too was calm, though her eyes were flashing; "there is no murder in Ongon's heart."

"How old is he?" asked Trenton.

## Ongon

"Yes, there is one of the points they are to make against him. Ongon is young, younger than any one even dreams, only twenty-two. They will claim that he has not reached the years of self-command. He loved his child passionately—a wonderful boy who could talk at ten months. They will show that the Indian spirit is revengeful."

"He can hardly fail of being arrested, Lusette," said Trenton gravely.

"He would have been seized long ago if it had not been that the government fears the people's anger. The government is even disposed to treat Ongon as it did Black Hawk, to pardon him, but do you know innocence, and that which has not had great publicity, has not the chance often given burning lawlessness? Ongon never consented to Black Hawk's raid, but that counts little in his favor now."

"Lusette, I believe Ongon is innocent," said Trenton decisively.

Few as were these words their effect upon the gypsy was electrifying. She had not expected it, however firm in her own belief. Her eyes were wells of gratitude and pleasure. Soon her face and whole being seemed flooded with joy.

"Thank you, Major Trenton, I was afraid——" She finished the sentence by embracing Josie, who had risen to take the gypsy's hand, and had burst into tears.

"You see the Indians can be demonstrative, Major Trenton," said Jean lovingly. But Josie had gone to be apart to talk with the Great Spirit. "Do you know she believes in dreams," said Jean, softly; "and thrice she has dreamed that Ongon's life was taken; but I don't believe in dreams—gypsy that I am."

"Neither do I," said Trenton.

"Now you understand why I keep a trained serpent," said she smiling, "I am to work out a persuasion, sir."

"I believe you are on the right track, Lusette, and come to think of it, I have an old friend, once a detective himself in a way, who may be a help to us. I must go to see friend Will—the tavern-keeper at Michigan City, if you have ever stopped there."

"Don't be afraid if you find moving bushes thereabout, Major." And Jean told him of her night at the inn and of Clermont's promise in the morning.

"If nature had pitched Mr. C-r-a-p-s name and environs in a different key he might have been a musical composer," said Jean smiling.

"He does know a thing or two," responded Trenton.

"Yes, he knows how to make use of discords," rejoined the girl.

# The Luncheon and After

## XXII

### THE LUNCHEON AND AFTER

Nothing brings an immeasurable acquaintance so fast as a June-luncheon in the country. Crumbs blown to the flowers where grass is cleaner than linen and birds are peeping with promises to take care of the remnants daintily. Even a squirrel came down and was coaxed to help himself to the nuts. His airy majesty sniffed as they offered him peanuts, but frisked away gaily with the tendered hickory nut. "Ha," cried Jean, "abundance doth make epicures of us all!"

Yes, while the deep sky was hovering near the sea of primroses with the eyes of the violets, amidst a dozen other flowers, peeping at them too, and asking for no gift but a moment's attention to their modest presence, Trenton also was an epicure. He was ready to vow that a pair of blue eyes belonged to an infinitely more unexplorable world than the heaven beyond the soft June sky. Sweet was the repast of three who, believing in Ongon could relax from thought to be each other's company. Did not the atmosphere seem to breathe unto them all the charm it had gathered from lawn fêtes and picnics and wild woods throughout all time?

Then to go home together! They let him row, because they said it was down stream, anyhow—and he had tried them out talking to him. In the excitement of the long days that followed, Trenton never forgot the pleasure of the return. The canoe was made to row or paddle. He chose a long, steady stroke, and they began living as one, the sense of grace and strength in strong arms and Indian boat on yielding stream.

Jean forgot the responsibility resting upon her and was a beautiful, dreamy girl who could not keep her hands out of the water, and smiled to herself over a child's thoughts again. And the stream laughed back to her, holding her image and the sky beside.

At first she hardly seemed to hear the conversation between Trenton and Josie, who sat at the soldier's feet and explained to him her quaint interpretations of nature. But after a while Jean talked to them, too, with a girl's philosophy of life out of a girl's enthusiasm. She had read much, Trenton discovered, but she had thought more. When somehow the subject turned to prayer, she defined it as a proof that God wished man to have his own way, and to follow his own plans, and to realize his own desires. Only youth and purity and a true will could have formed the definition, but it

## Ongon

seemed to be part of her very atmosphere and life. Literature was the mirror of Love's world-spirit. And she told of how fiercely her own spirit had beat against the void until epoch after epoch filled it and she knew of Hannibal and Cæsar, and Charlemagne and Napoleon. Then she found her native ignorance, that thirsted to know of men and women who had lived before, was only part of the same spirit driving her that had driven them who had filled the world with memorable deeds. Had they thought that on the same waters now carrying them homeward, Joliet, La Salle, and Marquette had pushed their way through storm and peril only to penetrate their ignorance and know the world?

She played in the water again and talked in broken sentences about themselves. How well Trenton remembered it when the days came back that took her from them! He knew then that he loved this girl and that she answered every craving of his nature. Gypsy though she might be had she been free to love him he would have gloried, as man never gloried before, in leading her to the altar as his wife. But he was too noble to encroach upon the holy ground that belonged to her one affection. He recognized the right, inalienable and beyond human control, of the heart to give itself where the hand could never be bestowed. His love could be as sacred for this girl as hers for Ongon and as unexpressed; for he doubted not Ongon had never known the story of the gypsy's love.

His thought quickened his pace—and in the mystery of movement saved his life. An arrow, sent to his heart and true to its aim, had glanced on the oar. Some one concealed on the left bank had sought to take revenge at last upon the Indian fighter.

The gypsy had already risen in the boat balancing herself lightly, and in a moment her pistol was flashing, and with a cry of rage or sorrow or both, Wautoma had dropped the splintered bow, and was rushing upon them with a huge stone to capsize the boat. He had not noticed Josie, for she had been sitting low in the canoe. Now she, too, had raised herself and seizing an oar, with two strokes had brought the boat to land and had leaped upon the shore. There was no hesitation in the Dakotahn. She also had a pistol, which she drew and planted coolly against Wautoma's breast.

"Are you mad?" demanded the girl with flashing eyes. "Do you want to be degraded a year by Ongon?"

"I must hate Ongon," muttered Wautoma.

"You must hate Ongon?" repeated the girl wonderingly.

"Yes," replied the sorrowful chief.

"Then go," her words were colder than steal and far more in-

## The Luncheon and After

cisive. Wautoma could not mistake their meaning. Then she had renounced him forever.

"Oh, wait, I had to hate him!"

"Oh, you did," her words were more distant than the poles.

"Stay, listen Josie, that man stole my picture," entreated Wautoma.

"What has that to do with Ongon?" demanded the girl.

"Ongon ignores me."

"In what way?"

"He don't know the value of my picture."

"Neither do I, you are conceited."

"But Wautoma, I sent you word to come to the Sauganash to-day to get the picture," Trenton had come up with his usual salute for the chief.

"It is gone from the Sauganash, you took it away last night."

"Wautoma, sit down there, if you please," said the gypsy, coolly reloading her weapon.

Glad not to have to leave the Dakotah maiden the Indian showed surprising obedience.

"Cat's-paw has been to see you," said Jean without looking at him yet.

The Indian hung his head sullenly.

"And he has tried to poison your mind. Tell me, did you really deep down in your heart believe Cat's-paw, or was not it a rage and a fight for one hour to doubt Ongon?"

She had touched the truth in him. "That is so, Wautoma worked by lies and was tied by them. He told Josie first to see how it sounds. Ongon is good. Wautoma loves him."

The discovery was made by both Jean and Josie at the same moment—Wautoma had been drinking, which accounted for the possibility of his strange conduct.

"Wautoma," said Jean sadly, "who gave you whisky?"

"Paleface, big agent, and the men, Wautoma dared do it."

And then it was wrung from him that he had been approached with skill by those who wished to arouse in the chief a first suspicion against Ongon. A bragging party had been arranged, it would seem, and the young chief, being full of his exploits, had led in his stories and bravos. He would follow any man anywhere on a wager—and as he had kept his word, such was his final condition.

"Josie sobered me," said Wautoma at last.

"I should think so," said that maiden, but turning away to hide her crestfallen spirits.

## Ongon

"Wautoma, are you going to separate yourself forever from Josie? Do you know what she has told me?" asked Jean.

The Indian looked up quickly.

"She said that if you proved the true, good chief she was going to marry you when she was sixteen."

The chief arose and held out his hands eagerly toward the gypsy. "Talk to her for Wautoma, be good to poor Indian chief, Wautoma broken, sick, do any thing."

"But can't talk straight," said Josie bitterly.

"Promise any thing, Josie, see, sober!" She had worked in him so mightily that his last word was like opening the old door to his old self.

Josie looked at her mistress.

"Are you willing to sign it—Josie will write her name and your name in her own blood, together with your writing hers and yours on this same paper, if you promise never to drink another drop—will you?"

He was reaching for the needle in the gypsy's hand and his blood was flowing freely from the long gash he made with it on his arm.

"Can you love Major Trenton, too?" asked Jean softly in a pause before giving the needle to Josie.

Wautoma sprang up, walked about the tree slowly, looked Trenton full in the face, saw the soldier's kindly spirit in them toward him, glanced at Josie who had taken the Major's hand affectionately, and then, when both Trenton and Josie stretched forth their free hands, the proud young blood in him lost its fire and the three were joined in one clasp of hands.

I am proud of you all," said Jean from the outside of the trio's circle—"and lonesome!" Trenton was willing, Josie was willing, Wautoma was willing—Jean could take but two hands and they were Josie's and Wautoma's. If she could have read Trenton's thoughts—but she had been going so fast in a different trend from his!

Josie wrote the names first, in little trembling lines that followed each other as softly as the ripples on the calm waters, Wautoma tossed the same in great waves of eager devotion that fairly swept themselves off the paper in their mightiness.

But too deep was the quiet now in Josie's bosom for Trenton and Jean to share. Wautoma had a heart and Josie knew that she had won it sacredly. They turned away together, gypsy and soldier.

"So once," said Trenton—Jean pardoned him for it—"an arrow aimed at my heart has pierced through two with Cupid's dart."

They heard Wautoma laugh. Josie had said something about

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"HAD HIS BOLDNESS BEEN GREATER, OR HIS CHARACTER LESS——"

## A Confession

the picture. "She will tell him she likes his picture," said Jean, looking into Trenton's eyes laughingly.

"It has been a likeable day," said the soldier, after he had murmured his thanks at last for her having saved his life, and she had disavowed that she had played anything of the part in the affairs of the afternoon that Josie had.

"And it has all turned out as a summer shower on a picnic day ought to," said Jean; "the storm was too brief to take away the pleasure and it has cleared leaving everything more fresh and lovely."

They were standing before the tree that had received Jean's bullet after it had ruined Wautoma's bow. By accident, at the same moment, Jean and Trenton were seized by an impulse to cover the mark on the tree with their hands. In after days Trenton returned to the spot to put his hand upon the place where the bullet had entered—as if in so doing he might have communicated to him again the touch that had vanished, with its revelation of affectionate tenderness toward him, and with all the accompanying light in her eyes before her hand had been withdrawn. Alone, with Jean gone, he fought himself for the silence he had put upon his lips and for the resistance he had given his arms. By greater boldness then and less character he might have saved life and suffering.

### XXIII

#### A CONFESSION

Catherine Dale had stood at last in the presence of Ongon—and had come forth bathed in sweet peace. She had not thought of his being an Indian, for she had felt the power of Man. It had been said by others that his influence lay in a mesmeric gift the strongest could not withstand. But there had been no passes on his part, no corners of conversation, no effort to dethrone her will.

She had begun by confession. God had struck her spirit blow after blow. She had tried and believed—and lost and failed. Wishing to conquer the world, it had overwhelmed her. Once believing herself born to be happy, now she was unhappy in everything. She felt like a deserted landscape full of fog and desolation. While in one sense she had won, in another, and higher, she had lost beyond all hope. Heaven had sent her misery and she had begun to say impertinent things to God. What had she done that God had thrust her through and through?

## Ongon

"And oh, Ongon, priest-king, I have lost the tones that touch the soul!" She had uttered the cry standing half-averted from him, her eyes downcast, her fingers playing passionately with the ends of the ribbon at her waist, and the loveliness of her form speaking aside with exquisite suppliancy to a luxuriant nature.

His answer had been all delicacy and feeling. She had not distinguished between her dreams and her real sentiments. Mortals were angels if they could. But bitterness is a bad dream, whose mad wailings strike others' hearts no more than the efforts of the will in nightmare can speak the word that will bring from another the awakening touch. But she had really half-admitted that to suffer patiently cruel wrongs is the path to all nobleness. She had told it all in one sentence—that she had a horror and terror of asking anything. That was a departure from childhood and simplicity. He had asked her to come again the next day.

Before her mirror after the visit she found that she was much prettier, that her complexion was fresh and velvety, and her eyes bright and sparkling. Beyond stark hopelessness was a glimmering. And yet how few and simple had needed to be the words of the forest chief-king!

## XXIV

### THE LILY IN THE STREAM

"If there is an explanation why the Indian has been permitted to suffer so much, I—I shall believe." Catherine had come to Ongon in a rich but simple robe, finding her way with sweet gliding just before him as he stood by the river wrapt in pleasant thought. A delicate beauty was in her face and a touch of girlishness in her voice.

"There is a lily in the stream," said the chief-king, with a gallant grace of the head that accorded her all the pure loveliness of the flower. "If I were painting the Indian, I would not represent him as stooping to grasp the lily while hopelessly hindered by a load on his back."

His manner of talking was with that delightful abandon she had expected and dreamed and wanted of him. She had his company for an hour and afterwards realized how much it meant to her.

"The load?" asked Catherine, bending prettily with her great pleasure for the flower which the chief-king accepted in the same royal simplicity with which it was offered him.

"The load is a burden of plunder, let us say," replied Ongon. In

## The Lily in the Stream

the pause he smiled. He was waiting for her to express his meaning and she had understood him quickly.

"The Indian's disposition in such a case will not permit him to lay aside the burden; and if he bends forward far enough to reach the flower he will lose his balance, and then, wetting his plunder, lose also his desire for the lily?"

"When you take the conception you must make him so," replied Ongon.

"What shall we do then?" asked Catherine simply.

"You must paint an angel above the Indian, ready to remove the burden," replied the chief-king. "God will sometime help the Indian to the flower."

"Why should not the white man come gather the lily and give it to the Indian lovingly?" demanded Catherine.

"The white man is too occupied in his building boats for commerce on the stream to consider the savage at its brink." There was no condemnation in Ongon's voice, but rather pity.

"That is it!" exclaimed Catherine.

"No, good artist," replied the chief-king gently, "that is only painting the white man with ships on his back." He had answered her question by his calm strength of view, rather than by his words. Indian caprice, a wise Providence, guardian angels, were working together, even while apparent hopelessness stared the redman in the face. It was a long view, but it possessed him.

"You look so far off," said Catherine.

"Nay, let us say I have been given to see afar," replied Ongon—"and I have seen something about you," he added looking at the lily.

"Oh!"

But he had turned aside first to tell her how the day before when she had spoken hard thoughts against Trenton, he had only wished she might have understood something of his problem. She could not have harbored revengeful feelings against him had she known what had driven him westward.

"And the vision?" asked Catherine, not ready yet to confess to anything in that new direction save a hesitant arch of her head.

"First, I must say a word to you about myself," said the chief-king with a smile.

"Catherine drew a breath of real pleasure, "Oh, do tell me—ten thousand words!"

"Life is made for us as soon as we accept the fact that we are put unalterably in a place for a high and beautiful purpose. Time

## Ongon

was when I lived in rebellion. At first it was a battle for me to understand my people. Their ways were strange and mysterious to me, and I quarreled with them, while the white man's pleased me. Then Minnetonka came into my life. She had listened to the story of our Master's obedience, and when I understood his life, I saw a way out of my darkness. Thus the princess had taught me to appreciate the strivings of my people. I believe that the white man will some day desire to find the heart of the Indian. In it are buried the richest natural treasures of the American continent. Did you ever think that in Christ there is a way for God to justify himself for all the permission of human conditions on his part and a way for every creature to triumph?

He had said enough to awaken great inquiries in Catherine's heart. Could it be that he was not an Indian? It was a question to ponder. If so—his was the greater achievement still.

She had found another lily and had given it to him lovingly. "What shall I do?" she asked, referring to his vision for her.

"You are now on the eve of seeking a solution of your own problem," said the chief-king with a satisfied conviction in his voice. "I would begin not by attacking the whole problem at once, but by finding a way to solve the nearest perplexity. Suppose you set out to discover that picture of Wautoma with the philosophy"—he smiled—"that it was a wise Providence that caused its loss and that there is a loving meaning in it for you?"

He had talked to her like a brother, and the words were running in her mind "God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell——." If there had been no Indian problem she had never met Ongon!

"Agreed," cried Catherine from out the conflict of her feelings.

"Then if you should make your way, say with Josie, to a tavern some sixty miles to the east, you will find a man of wonderful detective powers who has often been my only source of reliable information. I think that he can help you. His name is William Buckingham Craps. You can afford to have all confidence in him."

Catherine felt the impulse to follow his direction implicitly. It would ally her with a method. For all her genius, she had the desire to be guided as a child. And it was as if she was to have the priest-king with her on her way. And so all felt who had been in the presence of Ongon.

# Interrupting a Process

## XXV

### INTERRUPTING A PROCESS

Innocence is not the necessary forerunner of grace. Neither is seeming perversity either total depravity or hopeless piety. One may worship at a false shrine because worship he must at some shrine. And so there is pardon for a mortal, and hope as well, if when angels have his name on their lips his own may be mumbling strange incantations. For one may turn on his knees in quickest repentance—if there is anything worshipful behind him.

It was not a laudatory enterprise that still engaged Craps, if the irate guest was to be the judge. "A dollar a night for such a bed is extortion. You are certainly taking advantage of prosperous times!"

The protest was eliciting an appropriate response.

"Certain people need prosperity to teach them to despise it," said Craps, reaching for the extra money.

"But we don't all get it," growled the gentleman.

"Our fault," returned the host; "success is like sleep to the nervous—a certain amount is due every being and if a man will steady himself to expect it, and will circulate his blood a little, the thing will come of its own accord and in pleasing proportions."

"How do you do, Will!" said a different voice behind.

"Why, Major John, you do me honor," cried the landlord, turning from gay to grave, as he wheeled about and greeted the soldier with solid pleasure.

"I interrupt a process," said the officer with a twinkle in his eye.

"You terminate it—for the present," said Craps, waving his hand to the guest in a way that said plainly that there were times when it was no time to make money.

If the host could let go the extra, so could the guest, and the silver fell back into the latter's pocket, while pocket and all fell back to the door.

"He is gone with the better part of the argument," laughed Trenton.

Craps said that he would be paid a hundred fold if he could be permitted to get a fellow a steaming dinner. "My, John, I remember when you were a little boy——"

"Spare me, Will, there's no one here to spank me," said Trenton with a reminiscent grin.

"'Deed there isn't," murmured Craps, looking over the athletic

## Ongon

build of the soldier with pride; "there isn't any one can do it, I reckon, John."

But then Trenton must look at the sketch of his boyhood self taken by Craps the lad five years his senior, and they must laugh together over tragic outcomes and philosophize over early bearings on later days! At twenty-six and thirty-one, fifteen and ten are more than half of all existence. Then they grew sober and by mutual consent passed by a sadder lapse of years.

"I have come to say I have need of you, Will," said Trenton after a pause. "Could you leave here and go away with me?"

"There, I dreamed last night that I ought to accept the thing! Been offered a price for my establishment. Decided to accept it anyhow, since a certain old-timer came through here whose presence means harm, I know. I'm pretty much of a rover to be tied down, here anyway. But indeed I will go away with you, Major Jack!"

"I've seen him too," said Trenton with feeling.

Craps looked up suddenly. "You do not mean that Buhl-Bysee has crossed your path again? Ah, I see; indeed, I will try to be of some help to you, Trenton."

They talked of the picture briefly and then of Ongon. The landlord asked whether his friend had ever heard of the crime against the chief-king's youth? "There is a secret there some day to be brought to light," said Craps, "and it has helped me many a time."

"Now, Will you must forget about that," said the soldier, noticing the depression coming upon his friend. "You know that you are innocent, and you can afford to wait until the truth comes to light, as you say of Ongon."

"Aye, but to have served in the penitentiary, John, the very disgrace of it breaks a man down. It is too bitter to stand long. Aye, it is too bitter."

"Remember Joseph in prison in Egypt, Will."

"Nay, the Pharaohs are all dead, and there is no messenger can come to me, John. I am ostracized. Think what I was—and then look at these rooms. Now, if I were fifty, the blood would not be so hot in me. And yet"—it was as if he was lifting himself out of the pit by his own boot straps—"do you know after talking with Ongon I feel that if we will give the Almighty a chance, let him have time, there is not a sinner of us but he is well off. It is having to live alone, John, that is it; to see the weakling in high places, to note the trifling mistake, perhaps the very vigor of over truthfulness and faithfulness, get us into difficulties that wrench us from our careers—that is galling. But——" he arose and paced the floor while

## Interrupting a Process

speaking, "did it ever occur to you that God is novel? The hero of a story must work and live against odds or he does not hold our attention, perhaps these nightmare troubles of ours just keep us some way in God's attention? But it is hard to rule hatred out of order to give the main question the floor in our minds."

The landlord had been called out just as two women entered the opposite door. They were Catherine Dale and Josie. He hastened to greet them.

Catherine spoke first, in an astonishingly different tone from the scorn at the ruins. "I am sorry, Major Trenton, to have involved you, by a fit of my rashness, in troublesome perplexities. I am come to seek a gentleman who can help both of us."

He could have said exactly the same words to her. But since she had overwhelmed him with the unexpected, he gave her in return the sweetest confidence a man in his estate could not but give.

"I was a dunce, Miss Dale, but if I had known a few days ago what I have learned since, I might have acted sensibly."

He had not said too much, and he had said it so naturally—he felt every word of it, and that was the requisite with Catherine Dale—and stopped so wisely—universally a befitting thing to do—that Catherine, remembering as well his exalted courage and brilliant idea in taking the picture for a shield, was thoroughly pleased with him.

"Do you know of any detective I could get from this place, Major Trenton?" she asked, beaming upon him her full forgiveness.

He could not resist the temptation. He did know of an excellent one, would they be seated while he ordered their horses groomed and he called the gentleman. Trenton finding Craps, explained to him the situation, asking him to put on his best suit for the meeting with the artist who had painted the picture of Wautoma. "Been forgiven," said Trenton happily. "Will, it's one of the unaccountable miracles, I'd have offered her ten thousand for the picture to have gotten such a pardon had I dared!"

"Ideas are worth more than dollars, she perhaps has a new philosophy," smiled Craps.

Trenton was even happier over Craps when he came down than he had been over Catherine's cordiality. Dress had transformed the landlord. And Craps was feeling in as fine spirits as his clothes.

"This is Mr. William Buckingham Craps?" asked Catherine, rising with a pleased look and stepping toward him with extended hand. Her manner was too open and warm-hearted to permit Craps to be more than inwardly startled by her mention of his full name, for Trenton had agreed never to give any one that.



## Ongon

Giving *him* her hand! But the full glow of its touch was still buoying him upward as she explained to him rapidly the need she had of him. Somehow he soon forgot himself as he stood before her and answered her questions with the graceful ease of a cultured gentleman. Her account of the taking of the picture was a woman's, with bits of fun now and then in it for Trenton. It was a good tale to tell now that nothing serious except the loss of the picture had resulted, and Josie helped to embellish it.

"You say the picture was stolen afterward from the Sauganash, madame?" he asked with a playful light in his eyes when she had finished; "a hotel is usually too safe a place for grand larceny, I mean out here."

"Where valuables of any size seldom enter," added Trenton with a soldier's pleasure at making a double stroke with one slash.

"Sirs, you have sometimes stopped at one," said Catherine smiling.

"Occasionally," admitted Craps.

"Suppose now a detective should open a hotel, Miss Dale?" said Trenton in compliment to the detective.

"It would not be run like"—Catherine's eyes had swept the room hastily—"like hotels in general."

Trenton judged she was taking note of the detective's head to paint it as part of his reward for the return of the picture. And it was a fine head, now that it had clothes to match it. There was nothing like putting one's best suit forward!

"Madame," said Craps, feeling the honor of Catherine's last remark, "the detective may yet have to play the host to get that painting."

"I've been thinking, Miss Dale," said Trenton, brightly, "how much better your first meeting with Mr. William Detective gets on than the first with a certain soldier."

It was Craps who laughingly replied, "There are sensibilities which those that have dealt with so blunt a thing as a sword cannot appreciate."

Catherine beamed upon him. Trenton sighed. Josie shook her head.

But the men were beginning to feel guilty. This pleasure did not honorably belong to them. In speaking of the landlord as a detective and in introducing him as such, even in fun-loving goodwill, Trenton had committed an offense more unpardonable than his taking the picture. Craps, too, was growing more quiet. It was with a heavy heart that he promised to use his influence to get the

## The Apology

artist and Josie the best room in the house. The pleasantry had involved them hopelessly. Had it only been the little pastime itself, they could have explained then and there. But how could Trenton bear to tell it of his friend, when now, because he had introduced the man to Catherine Dale, he must speak cruel testimony against him?

And yet Catherine had gone upstairs turning prettily about on the first step to express her pleasure at the honor of having met the detective!

### XXVI

#### THE APOLOGY

Catherine Dale thought the apology on Trenton's lips when he came to her later referred to the old subject. "Major Trenton, while we are sorry the picture had to be taken, I am glad that it has brought the second disaster."

He did not reply anything coherent except that he was afraid she misunderstood him.

"You haven't another primrose, have you?" asked Catherine, smiling.

Trenton drew from his coat an envelope in which were the crumbled leaves of the once rejected flower. "When man by his thoughtlessness has offended a true woman he thanks heaven that life is long enough to chance sometime an opportunity to make amends," he said, telling with his eyes that he wanted her for a friend.

"Dear little flower, may I take the envelope and all, Major? Do you know I think that I have met more really true men in the last month than in all my life before?" She was reaching out her hand to him—"We *can* be friends, Major Trenton."

"Miss Dale, what you say cuts me to the heart," said Trenton with desperation. "Yesterday at this hour I should have been jubilant over your words just spoken, but now, when valuing them even more highly, I have lost all right to them. I have come to confess. My friend whom I introduced as a detective in the room below would also see you and explain, if that were permitted to him, but alas, that is a forfeited right for him and he feels it most keenly. But we were elated, I was at fault and began the subterfuge. He never would have thought of it himself. He is only an inn-keeper now and not a detective and deems the post you offer him too honorable for his acceptance.

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"Mr. Craps is a most worthy and most modest gentleman," replied Catherine, sweetly, and he has a most honorable friend who persists in calling himself names. That is a habit we all acquire when we oughtn't to and I have resolved to put my complete trust in those who are so violent against themselves."

"But, Miss Dale——"

"Do you know, Major, I passed a night without a single bad dream, the first for some time, and I do not possess any reason for quarreling with either you or Mr. Craps because he happens to own this modest house. Now upon your honor, sir, Mr. Craps is the kind of a man who is likely to own a good deal more—dare you deny it?"

"As to money he is a rich man, I admit, Miss Dale, but——"

"You do not mean to say that you would slander his character, Major?" she bent forward eagerly.

"Not his character, I believe that to be beyond reproach," replied Trenton.

Catherine looked relieved. "Then, Major Trenton, what is it, speak frankly?" Her manner had returned to the state of repose in which she had announced her unalterable trust in the violent.

"His reputation has suffered—he bade me tell it all to you and say it at once briefly—in the eyes of the world, Miss Dale, where he is known, he is a pardoned criminal—convicted of murdering another man when under the influence of drink. He served two years in the penitentiary and at last was pardoned by the governor of his State."

"Then even the governor admitted his innocence," said Catherine quietly.

"No, Miss Dale, but the circumstances of the affair did not seem to warrant life imprisonment."

"Was he guilty of the crime, do you believe?" asked the artist, looking up.

"I believe he is entirely innocent of the deed, and purely the victim of circumstances, and hope some day to prove it," said Trenton proudly.

"How has it affected Mr. Craps?" asked Catherine gently.

"For a long time he too believed that he must have committed the murder and lived the horrors of a guilty man. A sensitive soul, the isolation cut him to the heart. I have heard him say that there have been times when his hands have trembled as he received from the post a letter which for the moment he thought was in the handwriting of some old friend. Each time the disappointment fastened upon his life."

"Did you not write him?" asked Catherine.

## “Let Us Change Everything”

“I was abroad those years in study and travel, somewhat isolated myself from the world—pouting days, I am sorry to say—and when I returned the days of his imprisonment were about over.”

“You say about over—you had some influence in getting his pardon, then?” asked Catherine quickly.

“Because I believe in his innocence,” said Trenton, the pensive sadness returning to him again. “Miss Dale, we wronged you yesterday, but I did it because I knew he hungered for a woman’s recognition. Not since that night has a woman’s hand been extended to him. It killed the delicate, sensitive girl who was to have married him. He was never a drinking man, I do not believe he was drunk that night——”

“Major, will you bring him to me? I will be at the lake, and tell Josie I shall be in presently.”

### XXVII

#### “LET US CHANGE EVERYTHING”

“I, too, believe with Major Trenton.”

There was no smile upon the lips of Catherine Dale, but faith had touched her eyes and left its brightness there—enough to brush away the memory of the frowns of all the world. She had been gazing upon the lake as the two men approached and when they paused, she had turned to them with a womanly eloquence of face and form that spoke the gospel of her confidence before her lips had moved. Her head, as theirs, was bare, and her fingers were finding the pearls of the long necklace that fell below her waist. Everything in all her life had prepared her to be the beautiful woman she was in this great moment.

He who had played the detective a little while before was not now clad in broadcloth; but there are kingly times when true character would shine through rags and the lifting of condemnation from the guiltless is as the unveiling of glory.

At first the heads of the men were bowed as if knighthood had been conferred upon them. When they looked up, a queen could not have received greater homage. It was not vain pride that when the men clasped hands their tall figures were erect, and their heads lifted high, for tears stood in their eyes. She had opened a fountain of truth for them, and it had overflowed their souls with its refreshing. A woman’s faith, when she can give it wholly, is life to man.

“Your name is not Craps,” said Catherine, when they had passed

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together through the transfiguration scene in a silence of delicate beauty none dared to break. "I have noticed that Major Trenton has never called you Craps."

"William Buckingham," said the man over whom was still creeping new strength and power—changing his features as the rising sun on the mountain top drives away the shadows.

Catherine had turned her eyes again to the lake. "See," she said gently, "how squadrons of colors are chasing each other over the deep. Now one royal purple banner has been sunk in that inky chasm that came down from the horizon—but now it has arisen again a brighter, vaster glory. Then after a pause she brought her eyes to meet Buckingham's and gave him her hand again.

"Your kindness is a gift from eternity and the time is too short to grasp its unutterable meaning," said Buckingham, just suffering his fingers to touch her white hand.

And Catherine Dale knew that the lily was in the stream of this man's life. She had set him free to grasp it. Long they stood, speaking few words, drinking in the meaning of this new morning until a spirit of playfulness came upon Catherine. "Oh, Major Trenton," she cried, looking up wistfully at the soldier, "there is somebody near here I wish you could know and understand—she is called only a gypsy, but I thought of you when first I saw her."

"I am afraid Josie has secrets," said Trenton with a quiet smile.

"Secrets—then you know? What a pleasure it must be!"

"Pleasure always has a way of looking as if it would run away," said Trenton, indefinitely, while the artist nodded it was exactly so and more too. In a moment she brought herself abruptly before a newer thought. One glance at Buckingham had been the occasion.

"See, let us change everything!"

She had fastened her little round cap on her head and was gazing straight ahead without looking at any one in particular—as if just out of a dream, and not fully awake to understand where she was or what had passed.

"Alas!" if we change everything," said Trenton, "every thing changed will have new capacities for change, and a new dependence on the one who has changed everything."

In answer Catherine planted her feet firmly together with her hands folded beneath the short wrap which she quickly whirled into a muff. But the pretty cap could not contain much less conceal the mischievous curls that fell upon her shoulders and lent their glory to the arched posture of her head and body.

## The Printed Record

"Are you listening for a surprise?" asked Buckingham, for the first time smiling.

"It is going to be worth living to accomplish—let us help transform everything. Let us be friends." She was so pure and so wrapped in the devotion of her thought that these two men needed her—an angel could not have come down to take up their cause with more unexpected brightness and enthusiasm.

"There shall be no *half* turning, Miss Dale, be assured," said Buckingham, picking up her handkerchief that had fallen and returning it to her as an artist would have loved to return the pencil of one of the masters.

### XXVIII

#### THE PRINTED RECORD

The touch of Catherine Dale's hand had literally changed the blood as it ran in Buckingham's veins. And going beyond that, the shock of her faith in him had transformed his whole moral and spiritual fiber. Within an old drawer in his room in the tavern, under double lock and key, he found the parchment that had been a sort of wretched makeshift of a compass to his latter days. It was his will—a strange, queer, document, made in the spirit of revenge, and designed to be a fingerpost of scorn more indestructible than iron or granite. In this will were provisions for the children of his former acquaintanceship that had deserted him in his hour of need. When any of the children of such had become poor, their bare necessities should be supplied out of a fund bequeathed by him for this purpose. The remainder should endow a library for the town and provide for its maintenance—"where none should ever want for the friendship of a good book."

"When a tree isn't bearing fruit, it usually runs to leaves," was the estimation Buckingham now placed upon the document as he set a match to it and cast it into the stove.

While the will was burning a gust of wind caused a slamming throughout the house. It did not jar upon Buckingham's nerves for he was smiling to himself, while his mind made a new philosophy out of the material furnished by his heart—"An open window blows many a door to."

Yet his hand was rummaging nervously through the drawer and trembling visibly when an old package, blue, and sealed, was found. It was a newspaper upon which in flaming headlines was his name—and after it the words of horror. The hand of the reporter had

## Ongon

made everything of the two unusual circumstances of the crime. The magnificent club-house in which two of its members had quarreled and afterwards made up, only to reopen the feud later when alone and frenzied with drink, was pictured with all its meaning to society.

Then was told how the young woman who was engaged to be married to the murderer had entered with a friend—Mr. Augustus Buhl-Bysee—and how she had gasped at the sight of her betrothed lying in a drunken stupor with the blood-stained knife in his hand, with the club men who had entered, just beginning to gather about him. How there had been a pause—and the rest she had not seen. But falling herself beside her sleeping lover, and awakening him with her fall, it was told how she ignored his cry of recognition and astonishment, and had dragged herself away from him with a dying moan. Then the tragedy was rehearsed from the beginning again in smaller print, and Buckingham's speechless guilt was portrayed in all its development. How he had not attempted to defend himself, but had suffered the officers of the law to take him away without a murmur. His own lips had attested that so the girl had died as described. Then another, later paper, told how society had felt that it must ostracise the man who had brought such disgrace upon the club. Surely he had not drunk enough to have become intoxicated, how had he been drugged? It was still a blank in his mind, nothing came to aid his memory.

Might he not have fallen asleep, from the hard day's and night's activities in the twenty-four hours preceding the tragedy? Why had he never thought of that, or anybody else?—ah, because too convinced of his guilt on awakening, and too filled with the undesirability of life since that of his betrothed had been the penalty of his condition! Alone in the world he had not cared then to seek an extenuation of the circumstances.

But though he had burned his will this newspaper could not be effaced. In many a city the printed record had become to time what he thought his guilt would be to eternity. The newspaper files, like the tongues of gossips, have no certain location. Had not Buhl-Bysee a copy of this paper? Ah, here was a dedication of the foundation of a granite structure described in the next column. A copy of each of the day's journals of the city was to be placed in the iron box within the corner stone. Again a quiet, beautiful wedding on another page—who should say that they had not kept the paper? Here the notice of one who died in peace and a right to be mourned was given, with the request that certain country papers copy.

## The Printed Record

"It is spread from sea to sea; alas, poor name, poor Belle, God pity the man whose the deed!" Sailing-craft were few on the lake and yet so intent was the man upon the document of his past, he scarcely noticed the movements of the vessel coming in from the horizon. The great question lay on his heart, if a human life is made of the threads of its past, might he hope that the dark, coarse fibers of those reckless days could ever let him have peace?

The philosophy had come to him—God had created another woman, pure and beautiful, almost adorable, and had let her enter his life with a woman's tenderness and gracious kindness in order that she might punish him with the sweet excelling glory of her womanhood. For a little season he was to be permitted to breathe like a man, for a time he was to be helped into the circle of human affection—then left to work out his life alone, but on a higher plane. He had been a religious boy—with a gap of godless indifference between; intermittent faith finds it hard to believe in grace. After they lost that the Israelites wandered forty years, he remembered, and died outside the promised land.

Strange that on the envelope of the will were words he had never noticed before—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." How had these words come there in lead pencil? Ah, when he had made the will and had asked Ongon to be witness, the Indian chief-king had written the words in quiet protest and friendliness! The text was one that had moved him as a boy, strange to say, to want to be a missionary to the Indians. Now an Indian had given it to him for his gospel when he was groping in the dark! How living these words when faith in himself and his destiny was almost dying!

Now he traced upon the table with his finger the name of the chief-king, while slowly the text was crystallizing the cinders of his poor self into a lustrous hope. Then he was up with another surge of life, ready to be an active and healthy participant in the real struggle of the world, filled with vast enthusiasm to help save Ongon's life from his enemies. There was no need of locking the drawer again, for peace had destroyed the will and the newspapers he would give to Catherine.

Trenton's voice was calling him to hasten down stairs. Looking out of the window as he passed he saw that the little ship had cast anchor and that a skiff had been put down and was making toward the shore.



# Ongon

## XXIX

### TO-MORROW

When Buckingham reached the open air he was startled by the unexpected wave of excitement. The ship had signaled bad news to them and all were hurrying to the shore after Josie who, with a cry "poor Lusette," had darted forward.

"It is Wautoma in the boat, he says Lusette in trouble, needs me," cried the Indian girl, making signs rapidly back to the figure in the bow of the yawl. Mingled suffering and vexation characterized her movements. She was not pleased with Wautoma's slowness of expression. "Humph!" the sunrise Indians can't talk signs like the sunset tribes," muttered the Dakotah girl in exasperation.

"Something unusual has happened, I have never known Wautoma to come by boat before," said Buckingham in a low voice to Trenton. In spite of his caution, his words had carried to Catherine Dale's ears.

"Do you think that they have taken the lodge and the horses?" she asked anxiously, thinking not so much of the painting of Minnetonka as of the terrible meaning of it all, for Josie had been asked to tell her about the charge against Ongon. Since then she had been happy in her mind casting about how they might all help the chief-king.

"Not with Wautoma alive would they destroy the lodge," answered Josie, stopping in the midst of her vexation with Wautoma to defend him.

The artist smiled at the bit of true womanhood in the act, whatever the Indian variations.

"Josie is right," said Trenton; "no one could reach the lodge without first riding over the bodies of Wautoma and his band.

"Perhaps Cat's-paw has poisoned Wautoma's mind again, for he talks only of harm to the gypsy," suggested Catherine.

The flash was in Josie's eye, "Wautoma will die when he has spoken and his word is given for Ongon." Her feet were in the water and she was bending a keen ear to catch the first sound of Wautoma's voice.

The boat was now near enough for Wautoma to come to his glory. He had seen the result of his signs and when he began to utter a series of war-whoops the two white oarsmen paused to enjoy the vocal magnificence. His yell did not correspond with the interpretation of his signs at all. There was pomp and exultation in

## To-Morrow

the savage outcries that stirred the hearers to want to do and dare something fiercely quick.

Catherine, born lover of the artistic and potent elements in human life, was scarcely behind Josie in detecting that if anything had occurred it was not so much a direful event as it might be the opportunity of joyful activity. Who shall say that the wonderful influence of a great chief over his band has not been in large measure due to his power of putting motive and determination in his yells? At least Wautoma had communicated to them a readiness to follow him before he was understood. Meanwhile Josie was a-smile again and laughing to herself in great amusement. But that was laid aside for the present in the general eagerness to know the reason for Wautoma's coming.

The Indian's contempt for water was seen in Wautoma's leap when the boat was nearing the shore. A circus acrobat could not have jumped farther or wriggled in more uncertain gyrations, considering his coming down safely at last, than did the savage. It was not every day that he was given the opportunity for executing his specialty before a gentle audience and for Josie's benefit.

And it was as good as a side-show to see his shy glance at Josie to find out the impression he had made, when his body was in a posture to admit the use of his eyes.

"Welcome, Wautoma, what brings you to our shore in a ship?" asked Buckingham, smiling with the rest.

"To-morrow! to-morrow! to-morrow!" cried the chief exultantly.

"Something moving, then, Wautoma?" asked Trenton.

"To-morrow—Cat's-paw! To-morrow—Cat's-paw! Cat's-paw—to-morrow! Cat's-paw—to-morrow!" Whichever way it was taken to-morrow was to be up and Cat's-paw down, that much was plain.

"You have good news then, where will you begin?" asked Josie, showing an early wifely insight into the savage nature of man who must be left to his own devices when he is possessed of something interesting to tell.

"To-morrow Wautoma's band and Cat's-paw's band—and the gypsy and Cat's-paw," said the chief.

"Just so, we understand," said the Dakotahn with new pleasure that her husband to be could really hold a secret. "You have come for us, but why the boat?"

"Here, she paid gold for it, Ongon may need," said the chief pointing to the anchored vessel.

Then one of the sailors, when turned to, explained that they were

## Ongon

a little lumber craft and had been employed in running now up the South Branch about three miles for stone, and now in carrying timber from the Calumet—all for the first pier at the mouth of the Chicago River. The gypsy had paid them well to make a year's contract with her, and so they were out of the commercial into the poetic line just then, they might put it.

They were not to take the story altogether out of Wautoma's mouth, however, for he now snatched the thread. The boat was to be kept anchored at the mouth of the Calumet for emergency. The gypsy's father had known the sailors and they could be trusted. A crisis might come in events at any time. The presence of the boat would not be suspected inasmuch as it had been in the employ of the pier-contractor, also a friend of the gypsy's family. It was a good sailing craft and either Lusette or Ongon, or both, might have need of it any day. While the substance of these facts were being related by Wautoma and the sailors the company exchanged glances with each other. Who then was this gypsy, that she had such means and friends for the achievement of her purpose? And why so much for Ongon? And what?"

"She is prepared to do desperate things," said Trenton in a low voice to Buckingham.

"Ours to help her," was the answer; "it is apparent that she is to be the general-in-chief of this campaign and we must report to headquarters for orders."

Much to their disappointment, however, a brief note asked Catherine and Josie to hasten back by the boat with Wautoma, but to bring nobody else with them. Circumstances demanded it.

Josie was in too playful a mood, nevertheless, to suffer anybody to be serious. "Oh, Wautoma, you wanted to make sign that Lusette was in danger to-morrow maybe, and instead you said that her heart was bad and though she was brave she had been killed!" Then she taught him to say it with his hands as the Dakotah's did; and afterwards he watched her go with the artist to get ready for the voyage to the Calumet with a perfectly satisfied air. Other eyes were following the two, for it was the same spot where the waves had danced with new joy to Buckingham. If she had been an angel of light, Catherine Dale could not have touched the sands with lighter grace to him. As to Trenton's thoughts—she was growing more girlish and loveable.

When they returned from the house and were in the yawl, Catherine, flushed with pleasure at the thought of action at last, gave them each her hand and her warmest welcome to the lodge when

## A Broad Pathway upon the Waters

they should care to come into the wilderness. Buckingham made a start and then stopped short of execution. "Always obey first thoughts, sir," said Catherine, who had observed the movement and reached forth her hand smilingly for what he had made the movement to give her from his coat pocket.

"If when you have read that you will repeat the invitation——" he looked at Trenton.

"We shall come very gladly then," said the soldier, stepping nearer to Buckingham.

Once the awful paper was in her fair hands, Buckingham turned away, to find that Trenton had anticipated the movement and had stepped quickly to the other side, to stand cap in hand waving adieu to those in the departing boat, while his free arm was locked in Buckingham's. When Catherine stood at the altar by the side of John Trenton, Buckingham remembered the devotion of his friend, and knowing the beautiful strength of Catherine Dale, with her love for the excitement of a soldier's life and her affection for Major Trenton when his heart too, had become knit to the Indian's heart, Buckingham had no resentment against his faithful friend. And the strange events thereafter had come too rapidly for Buckingham to find fault with a directing Providence.

### XXX

#### A BROAD PATHWAY UPON THE WATERS

Wautoma and Josie sang themselves away as they moved towards the little anchored schooner. Sang the lake songs of the Chippewas, more anciently called the Ojibways, of which people came Wautoma. Often when his ancestors had gone in search of their allies the Pottawatomies and the Ottawas, also fierce boatmen, had they sung the same war chant. Perhaps before moving against the fathers of the Dakotah maiden, Josie! And perhaps the inter-marriage between the tribes was ordained that the Indian chieftain, always somewhat under the advice of his squaw, even for his battles, might have a spirited time at home!

Catherine wondered whether her own ancestors, the hardy Anglo-Saxons, not so many centuries before, disdaining to sleep indoors on a winter's night, had not ordained impatience for her blood, and the rushing, compelling spirit, at such moments when they, too, had chanted their battle songs and exulted in a night's advancement towards the morning's fray. Perchance morning itself, with its doors unlocked for conquest, owed its vehemence of spirit to the

## Ongon

Creator's wisdom in letting the human race develop out of barbarism. If all souls were like hers, then she pitied the day when there should be no barbarism left in man, no strivings, aye no cruelties—to be turned over to woman for her half-barbarous softening! Then Catherine joined in the Lake Song.

### WAR SONG OF THE CHIPPEWAS

SUNG ON THE LAKES WHEN ONE PARTY GOES IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER,  
TO JOIN IN THE WAR



And afterwards it was a strange paper to be clasped even tenderly in Catherine Dale's hands and to be read over and over again in the little cabin. When night came and she sat on deck in the moonlight the printed story was with her word for word. But did not frighten her. Rather it brought troops of strongest forces into her will. And yet the beautiful evening was the mirror of her soul—Under the silver light—that first beat a pathway on the waters and then clung to the horizon like a faint dawn of surprise at the loveliness of its own handiwork—the running outline of the distant shore was no longer a waste of sand. Day with its garish inspection, with its minuteness of detail and its glaring repetition of the commonplace was forgotten. The steady filling of the sails, with the gurgling rhythm between the ship's sides and the sturdy waves seemed to answer to her feelings in the progress of her thought.

On board the ship the difference between being calm and being becalmed is emphasized. In Catherine Dale's life there could have been nothing of pleasure or content in an idle stillness of soul. But to find a mast for the fabric of subtle malice in that newspaper still in her hands and to fling to the winds that coarse texture, until that which had been furled about a man's heart should become a carrying power to his life, this was calmness and peaceful strength to Catherine. And yesterday life was all darkness to her—when now a broad pathway was upon the waters!

She was a woman, and understood herself only so far as to look

## A Broad Pathway upon the Waters

p to the tall mast before her and to remember that once it grew  
a cold wilderness of nature. Only might her faith grow, straight  
nd strong, for life would be in its use.

Wautoma, afraid that the artist was lonesome, had come from  
osie's side. "I don't care so much for the picture now since Josie  
s so good to me," he said simply.

"How did you first come to be fond of Josie, Wautoma?" asked  
atherine, still able to enter his thoughts and understand the alchemy  
f his feelings.

"Josie was always kind to stray cats," answered Wautoma.

"Do you like cats, Wautoma?"

"No."

"Then why should you like that in Josie?"

Wautoma did not know, but he could tell her why he liked Mr.  
Traps.

"His name is changed, Wautoma, it is Mr. Buckingham now,"  
aid Catherine; "you like that better, don't you?" she added, seeing  
he pleasure on his face.

"Yes, it's longer and deeper," said the chief, to whom length was  
mystery, and mystery life. "It is more like him. Buckingham  
ikes my bucks, too."

"But why did you come to like him, did you say?" asked Cath-  
erine.

"Once when there was no corn he gave our village big money  
for food," answered Wautoma. Then he told how lately he and his  
braves had intended to kill the white men at the tavern, but that they  
ad resolved to spare Buckingham because of his kindness to them.  
That was before the picture was stolen. Did he not look fine to-day  
with the soldier when the skiff landed?

"But you didn't like Major Trenton, I thought, Wautoma?"  
observed Catherine.

"He can ride," answered Wautoma, as if he would relate the ar-  
guments for his conversion before stating the fact.

Catherine understood him. "What else, Wautoma?"

"He shoots like Ongon."

"Yes."

"Our gypsy has told how he loves Ongon and has been soldier  
because he thought that he could do more good that way. If we are  
kind to him, Lusette says he may not fight the Indians any more.  
She says he fought because there were some paleface Ongons and  
Minnetonkas who have been wronged by other Cat's-paws, and he  
did not know at first which were the Cat's-paws."

## Ongon

"What do you think of Major Trenton's taking that picture to save his life, Wautoma?"

"It was cunningly quick. Wautoma couldn't help but like him for that but when he thought that he had lied and wanted to steal the picture for good he hated him."

If the questions had been asked by Catherine to see whether the chief would be in full sympathy with the two men in their plans for Ongon she could not have been more fully satisfied. But for all Wautoma's hot head she had always loved to find his heart for the good it did her to see how the Indian was a human being that responded to kindness.

"Wautoma, how do you like Lusette?" concluded Catherine softly.

"Next to Josie, outside the family," said the Indian honest to the core in his frankness.

She did not say lightly, as many another would have said, "Present company always excepted." A week before Catherine must have felt it an ingratitude. Now she knew that to the childlike nature of Wautoma, loving sunlight, Lusette had won by appealing to a greater life and a sweeter reasonableness within him. Her wild life had its charm, too, but the forest man could feel that the gypsy was moving him toward something definite and helpful. Lusette had inspired hope in him, while she as artist had worked upon his despair. Even if the object of hope failed Lusette would be the one to keep alive the feeling of hope. The gypsy's faith had touched Wautoma's life.

And now Catherine felt as if in playing upon the artistic elements of despair within his savage breast, in order to effect the picture, she had been guilty of a sin against him.

How the moonlight upon the clear pathway to the horizon danced away the darkness with dreamy content. Oh, this wide, lake how many would come to love it, be influenced, strengthened, self-revealed by it!

"Wautoma, we will seek the picture, but perhaps we will be happier if we fail to find it," said Catherine, after studying the characteristics in the Indian's face that she had never found before.

"Yes," he said, "unless you will paint the other Wautoma!"

Catherine could have clapped her hands.

"I am glad that you like Lusette," said she, taking his hand.

"Wautoma just told Josie that he would die for her to-morrow," said the chief proudly.

"And she said?"

"She said that she could not love Wautoma unless at any time

## The Sun Dance

Wautoma would die for Lusette." They had been talking of Lusette before the moon came up he continued. Perhaps Josie would tell her, too, how she came to know her and be with her.

### XXXI

#### THE SUN DANCE

The spirit of Homer's Greeks, with their primitive love for the beautiful and the virtuous, possessed the Dakotah maiden when Catherine had welcomed her lovingly into the circle. Josie at Wautoma's request began by bearing her arm to show the artist where the slash of the medicine man had left its ugly scar.

"For Blue Earth," she said, with the first bitterness Catherine had ever noticed in her.

"Blue Earth bad man," exclaimed Wautoma. "Buffalo Skin wants Josie to marry Blue Earth."

"Buffalo Skin is my father," said Josie, "and Blue Earth paid a price for me and thinks he owns me. But he must begin with the Sun Dance."

"Josie you never told me anything about yourself before. You just came to me so naturally I thought you were just lent me by Minnetonka when I was good," said the artist as the Indian girl waited for her story to come to her in the right way.

"No, she belongs to Lusette," said the chief; "only now the gypsy has said that Josie could tell you about herself."

The accent on the last words told Catherine that she was not to hear everything now and quite as well that Wautoma had not heard everything.

"We have our Sun Dance in the full moon of June," began Josie. "We give it to the Great Spirit when the grass has come green. Lusette first came three years ago when I was eleven, and saw Blue Earth make the vow and be bound, in order to please my father. So should he have the English-taught daughter for his wife. That was me. The priest had me from the time my mother died when I was a babe until I was ten. So they called me the English daughter, but I am full Indian. The pole had been cut, tall like that sail pole, and the strings were tied in the muscles of Blue Earth's back, and he was hung from the pole. Some said that they saw then that Blue Earth was a white man, and thought that once he had been bad. If he could hang and whistle and dance in the air until he tore away his muscles, then he was to be called pure and good before all the people and become a medi-



## Ongon

cine man, and my father would give me to him for the money Blue Earth had paid. I grew tall at early time and at twelve I was to be married. That is early for our people. My mother had not been married until she was eighteen. Then Lusette came very brave and beautiful and said I pleased her and did I love Blue Earth. I poured out all my sorrow to her and she said she would see. The more clearly it was shown that Blue Earth would prove himself pure, the more I asked the Great Spirit to give me my Sun Dance prayer. We can always make our great prayer at the Sun Dance. It is our religious dance. I prayed that my father would let Lusette buy me and take me for her maid as she had said. "At sundown she came to me and said that we were free to go. She had bought my liberty of Blue Earth's hand and my father would give back the money to Blue Earth. I have been with Lusette since and she has taught me to do the things she does."

"What are the things, Josie?" asked Catherine.

"She said some day a good Indian chief would want to marry me and come for me. But I must not want to marry the wrong one. She taught me what to say to men and I learned that very soon."

"And what not to say, Josie?" asked Catherine with a smile.

"That is harder," acknowledged the girl; "men are not like women; they want so much and will give—as Wautoma gives."

"She taught you a great deal, Josie?"

"Yes, how to shoot, and be, as you say, independent, and not to seem to care for Wautoma until he had proved himself good—that was so easy—and not to fear about Blue Earth's ever coming to seek me again."

"You are afraid of that?" asked Catherine, noting an anxious tremor in the girl's voice.

"I have dreamed often that he would come to take me away," said the girl with a shudder, but Lusette laughs and says that she does not believe in dreams."

"Would you have to go?" asked Catherine.

"If father never gave back the money and came to tell me I must, unless Blue Earth would release me, or I was already married to Wautoma," said the girl with sacred reverence for custom, however much the dread. "I know lots of girls among the Sioux that married out of force from their parents. A girl will stand a bad husband rather than too much beatings and scoldings at home. We like to get married."

"Oh, Josie!" cried Catherine at this portrayal of woman.

## The Sun Dance

"Wautoma wants to marry me before the two years are up, but we do not care so much to be married in a hurry," corrected the girl.

"Wautoma, how did you woo Josie?" asked Catherine, noting that he wanted to say something.

"Every way," answered the young chief.

"How was the first way?"

"We began by saying that we will walk into *somebody's* house, and I said that too the first time," replied Wautoma.

"That was patient wooing," said Catherine, "and then?"

"Then I said Wautoma will walk in *her* house, in Josie's house," said Wautoma, still being orthodox.

"I didn't hear that though the first time he said it," observed Josie archly.

"Then I said, Wautoma will walk into Josie's house *some night*."

"And he did not know where it was and does not yet," laughed the maiden.

"And then I said, Wautoma will walk into Josie's house during the winter."

"Which winter?" teased the Dakotahn. "But if he will be very good," said Josie, seeing his sadness, "about two years from now in June time he may say, 'Wautoma will walk into Josie's house *to-night*.'"

"Did Blue Earth woo you that way?" asked Catherine of the girl?

"No, he came to the house with a cloak over his head and sat on a seat alone. Afterwards my father said that other was my seat and big enough for two. Then my father and the new other talked to me and tried to get me to go out and sit by Blue Earth's side. But I kept the day off without any beatings by asking my parents to look up the history of the man who wanted to be my husband. We always try to do that on both sides if we are good people. Blue Earth said that he was willing to give six horses for me, and that made me feel good, because usually it is not half of six, but the best are six. That made me the best, Wautoma. I had a little sister and she would be given Blue Earth too, according to the custom. But she was hurt by a soldier and died, and that put off the day. Then came June and the Sun Dance and so I never met beside Blue Earth."

Wautoma looked relieved. He had not asked quite so far into the fairs that had gone before and now had been following as eagerly as a reader does to see that his story's heroine is not kissed by the villain.

## Ongon

"I wished Lusette loved Major Trenton," said Josie frankly.

"Perhaps that would depend somewhat upon Major Trenton's first loving her," said Catherine with a smile.

"Oh, by his eyes I know that he would love her if he dared, but she turns him away and will never say anything to me about him."

"But it was sacred ground on which they were treading now, and Josie already had shrunk back from herself as if she had been disloyal to Lusette and felt guilty for the words which she had spoken. Again they let their eyes rest on the path of the moonlight upon the waters. Yet their thoughts were with the gypsy, whose courage and resources awed them, but of whose ways none were fully informed except Josie, while her final purpose remained only with herself.

### XXXII

#### BEFORE THE STRUGGLE

Nothing unusual appeared to be happening when the party left the schooner in the morning. Only one of Wautoma's band awaiting with the horses, and he seemed to act as if he felt he was in for a lazy day. An expert on Indian motions might have inferred, from an occasional stamping of his feet, in contradiction to his general shiftless air, that he had hopes of being shortly harnessed to an interesting line of activity but no expert was in sight.

Josie, however, observed much more than Catherine Dale. She soon was aware that they were riding along the trail between a double escort of Indians, dismounted, and either looking at them from behind the trees, or peeping from coverings in the grass of the prairie as they passed. One Indian was actually a stone, to all appearances, paleface judging, another had a flower patch growing from his back! And how the Dakotah maiden smiled at him! Catherine, too, saw a buck occasionally, but he was only a grave individual roaming about aimlessly at large, part of no tribal unit, with no share in aught save idle hours and worthless habits, poor savage!

"How the eyes of these poor men gleam in spite of their depressing condition, Josie," said the artist after meeting the third lone Indian.

"They look as if they never had a thing to do," acquiesced the girl.

"Wautoma does not say much to them," said Catherine disappointedly.

## Before the Struggle

"He mustn't," whispered Josie with a merry little laugh.

That gave the whole plan away in the instant and then Josie explained that Wautoma had a communication with each of the men who were his braves protecting them from harm on their journey—though he needn't to have done it. Thereafter every one of the braves seemed clothed with power. Everything was ordered and assigned, and that was enough for Catherine Dale's mind, to engage thoroughly.

"Have you seen anything?" asked Josie wheeling her horse about as they passed an Indian sitting on a limb of a fallen tree and scarcely noticing them at all.

Catherine said she thought that she had seen a very bored looking Indian, that was all.

"Have you seen that every Indian is either sitting on a limb, or carrying some branch of a tree, maybe only a mite of it? That means that it has been found that the plan will work and that they will be quartered in the different woods by and by."

But talking was over, Wautoma signed. Rightly, two white men were passing. Josie knew Buhl-Bysee, and guessed from Lusette's description that the other was the secret man, Clermont. Wautoma did not seem to know either of the men. Alas, Catherine had seen them both, and her head was throbbing with pain. Must they deal with *him* to-day? Then she knew Wautoma's light fancy that to-day would be up and Cat's-paw down was to have a sterner meaning before nightfall.

The two men were going fishing from the rods in their hands, but Catherine knew that Clermont had always detested the sport.

"Catherine," said Josie, "Wautoma may be too confident about the result of the struggle, would you mind listening to a plan to help Lusette that perhaps he has not thought of? I believe the secret man may find out everything that is to be done except what Lusette soon will do, and nobody could ever guess that." She whispered the plan—to which Catherine eagerly assented. It was just that of all things which she could do, and what would perhaps alone of all things help, should Clermont take the part Josie fancied he would.

"After another mile Wautoma turned with a proud face and spoke to Catherine, "You need not be afraid to stay here with Josie, Lusette will be here soon." It was a bower of shade just across from the ford of the South Branch, where they could talk over their plan which Josie thoroughly believed would save the day.

"You are a credit to our sex," said Catherine softly, but she could not have heart to smile just then, for it was now as if the very

## Ongon

turbulence of her years was to mingle its ~~fierceness~~ with the strife of the day.

Then Lusette came, dressed as before in the thin gray cloak and attended by two Indian girls, who carried a box between them. The cloak the gypsy laid aside, after Catherine had greeted her with a kiss, and she had given Josie similar greeting. Even Josie, who had seen it before, gave a cry of pleasure on beholding Jean's costume for the day. A clinging dress of black, close fitting, trimmed with lace, cut low in the neck and spangled all over with silver, to give her form its freedom, and to express its pure, girlish loveliness. Her hair, arranged Grecian fashion, low on her head, with a tiara of silver spangles; her arms were bare for this day of her triumph, and her eyes almost black with the intensity of the struggle through which she was determined to go to attain her end.

"I think it is to come out well," she said, plunging immediately into the work that was before her. "But I may fail and lose my life. I thought that I would let you see me just as I shall go in before Cat's-paw, therefore Josie will go with me, and you, my dear good artist, whom I have admired at a distance and hope to know some day intimately, will rest quietly at the lodge until the excitement is over. I think a woman's purity and prayers shall win and I shall be happy at last—so happy! Now let us pray." And kneeling there she offered a child's prayer to heaven for its guidance and blessing upon that which they in their infinite wisdom esteemed the best means for the work of the day. And she had them join with her in the Lord's prayer after her own brief petition.

Now Wautoma had come and, with the gray cloak over her shoulders again, she drew the chief aside and had him rehearse to her just what was to be expected of him. When satisfied that the chief was thoroughly persuaded of the importance of their acting in perfect unison she stopped in her hurriedness and sat down.

"Wautoma will you and Josie sing for us the chanted prayer, I love so well? Sing it softly please, very softly——"

"Stop," cried Catherine, gliding to her, "you do not really fear the results of it all, do you?" The face of the girl was so like an angel's then, Catherine felt a nameless dread seize her. What if this girl must pay the penalty of her life to save Ongon! She remembered afterwards the words of Jean and they helped her in that moment when she, too, at this ford must decide how much she could be willing to give up for the chief-king's life.

"No, no, Catherine, dear, but we must be ready to sacrifice our lives for Ongon."

## Strategy

Already the Indians were beginning the beautiful chant:

"Kau-gig ahnah-me-au-win  
We tebie-ga-dau  
Gitchy Monedo atau  
Songee sauge audau.

Matche pe-mau-de-zewin  
Kau-kinna, kau-kinna  
Matche pe-mau-de-zewin  
Kau-kinna wa-be-nundau."

Ever let prayer  
Be the rule of our lives  
The Great Spirit alone  
Alone let us love.

All evil-living of mankind  
All, all that is bad,  
All evil living—as a tainted wind  
All, let us forsake.

It was not a strangeness, out of place, a folly of unseemliness before the battle. "What a beautiful rest we have had together," murmured Jean at the end. "Miss Catherine, the girls will go with you now. Wautoma, I would hasten. Come, Josie, we can carry this together."

Catherine kissed the brow that was as white and pure as snow and they separated for their places of duty.

### XXXIII

#### STRATEGY

"Boy," said Cat's-paw in the Pottawatomie tongue to the lad playing near the tent opening, "see, a wild bear yonder, stealing along the woods! He must be mine, do you hear, within an hour. Go tell Bat Eye and all that he must be my fur."

"Dead?" asked the lad.

"Yes, dead, boy," growled Cat's-paw, giving him a lash upon the back with his cane for the tarrying. "Chief must have him dead within an hour, mind!"

The lad was already off to tell the dozen warriors of the old chief's order.

When the redmen had sighted the bear he was making toward the Aussaginaushke swamp, which, in the shorter, and crisper terminology of the paleface, had begun to be called Mud Lake. So

## Ogon

rapidly betook the bear to his race for life that the warriors left everything and joined in a noisy pursuit that left Cat's-paw in no doubt about the boy's obedience. Fainter, fainter, grew the sounds of the yells. Had not Cat's-paw wished to please Wautoma an hour ago he would have had his horses and could have ridden out to see the capture. But now he would wait alone until the skin was brought to him. The braves in pursuit suddenly lost track of bruin and scattered over the fields for a trace of the grizzly's hiding place. Almost with one yell they were crying to each other presently for aid—they were being outwitted by another band of Indians also wanting the bear's skin. Nay, wanting them, for the ruse had worked as Lusette and Wautoma had planned. At the exact moment the pursuers in search of the victim were prisoners themselves, with Wautoma's variations to Lusette's directions.

"Down," cried Wautoma, sitting heavily upon Bat Eye, nearest of kin to Cat's-paw, "the squirrels are with the bears." But the weight was as if the elephants were with them.

"Ugh!" cried the under Indian, half from the physiological reason of his position.

"Tie their hands behind their back, shoot the first one that yells again," shouted the chief, rising from his victim and walking around him with cat-like grace.

"It is a dull sport when there is no chance to play for the advantage," said the prostrate warrior in the dialect.

"We have no time for play, we have thrown each other once apiece, Bat Eye, and now we are bear hunting, just let me have that pistol, will you?"

It was evident that they had often had such rough and tumbles for all their flag-room connection, but now Wautoma was mysteriously grave, so Bat Eye knew something unusual was brewing. But being relieved of his weapon he was next being sounded about the secret-service man's movements.

Two of your people went fishing to-day with the paleface," observed Wautoma, measuring pistols the while.

"I know not," said Bat Eye strategically.

"You should not lie, truth-teller," said Wautoma, taking advantage of the reputation Bat Eye had for being opposite to his uncle Cat's-paw in straightforwardness and honesty.

"Well, then I do," said the under Indian.

"Thought so," said the other, quite as a mother about to chastise her child for disobedience: "feeling funny, aren't you for lying; oh, Bat Eye, I never thought that of you."

## Strategy

To hear this in the dialect of the Pottawatomie, which Wautoma used for Bat Eye, was very prolonged, however fewer the words.

"You would die sooner than tell, wouldn't you, Bat Eye," continued Wautoma, when his rival in prairie skill kept his silence.

"Yes."

"Well, now I will tell you, they are fishing for something very important," said Wautoma, ordering this one's hands tied too.

"You were racing to-day," said Bat Eye, when Wautoma assisted to make things sure.

"Oh, I borrowed your horses so that you could not hunt the deer too fast. Yes, I lied, I haven't your conscience, Bat Eye. You're too good for fast company. The horses are all tied together in the deep woods, but we just loaned them, you know."

The chief's bucks who, if the truth were told, had figured in more adverse than successful encounters, half-play, half-earnest, with the Bat Eye tribe, walked about with their Wautoma saying that his was too easy. All they had gotten was extra pistols, nice ones, too.

"Where's the bear?" asked Wautoma, with droll pleasure, turning one of his specialty somersaults in happy demonstration of his good feeling with himself. In answer the bucks must get down on their knees and go about on all fours asking where was the bear. But Bat Eye was cheerful while the fun was being poked at him, even though his followers brought near him all tied as he, gave him the gleam that it was a grizzly old trick against them.

"Yes, it's handsome," said Wautoma, reading the faces of the Bat Eye people and telling it to the taciturn Bat Eye.

"Where is the bear?" asked the bound chief at last.

Wautoma's cunning took the hint. "More than Cat's-paw knows the value of fur, and that it is scarce these days here. What *will* Cat's-paw do to you, though?"

Bat Eye was honest and desirous of saving his men from the wrath of his uncle. He offered therefore to let Wautoma wear his cross in the maple leaf; a thing permissible according to the flag-broom laws, if any one could be found willing to expiate for the guilt of an offender. "If you will let us up, Wautoma, you shall have the maple leaf for a month, and I will go without it—there, that is one for you against us."

Wautoma wanted to know whether Bat Eye would also give up the knife, and the beads, and the long pipe, and a list of other things that told how long had been the line of Bat Eye's successes against him.



## Ongon

No, Bat Eye would not be a fool. The necklace he had given to a maiden and the pipe was too good a triumph to turn back. Wautoma would be showing it to all the villagers for years and that was more than reason could stand.

"Oh, you are not so popular, Bat Eye; if I had that pipe everybody would be dancing with me, but the fellows among all the bucks think you are a prig. You ought to be a missionary, you are so good!"

Then it was Bat Eye's turn to be crafty and from his victor he gathered that something was being done to Cat's-paw, and that they feared Clermont and Buhl-Bysee. They were such easy prisoners that Wautoma could not help saying what he felt was sifted wisdom to divulge.

"You see Cat's-paw looks as if he were going to be a traitor to Ongon," said Wautoma.

"Never," said his nephew.

"Oh, you know Buhl-Bysee and that he was with Cat's-paw at the flag-room. What was that for, but to betray the chief-king?"

"Cat's-paw likes money," said Bat Eye, shamefully.

"I wouldn't be his nephew, then, if I were you," said Wautoma.

"I wouldn't belong to the same flag-room with him," countered the nephew.

"Oh, that is different, it isn't my fault," said the victor.

Bat Eye was too wise an Indian to answer unanswerable logic in that form and kept his silence. He saw that Wautoma was making preparations to go, leaving the prisoners in the hands of only two of his men, and if he could manage to get a knife, he believed that none, after Wautoma, was so fleet as he.

Instructed to take his time, before his next move, Wautoma took the pains again to mention his several victories over Bat Eye, and to hope that the poor buck would take his medicine like a brave Indian. Then he left with his frisky squirrels, save two.

## XXXIV

### THE ENCOUNTER

Cat's-paw had unlocked the heavy chest again to feast his eyes upon his glittering life harvest. Gorged to his eyes with the passion of possession, he nevertheless shriveled from its utter emptiness. The fire of avarice was consuming the innermost walls of his being, and his dark, cavernous features seemed to be on the verge of crashing down into an abyss of human wreckage. The fact that his

## The Encounter

temper was provoked by the delay in bringing him his new treasure made him look more lean and hungry and misshapen. He had ordered the boy to hasten, but still they loitered with the pelt.

"Hughh!" his quick ear had caught the breaking of stems in the thicket. It was the sound of feet. They were coming.

"Now Josie, open the box right here," whispered Jean before springing out. Be sure that the thread is on his head and keep out of sight!"

"Ugh! squaw—the serpent woman!" The stick was in his hand to strike the lad—he had not looked for it to be a woman—she was followed by the bear!

Jean came before him so quickly, with her dazzling white arms, and her radiant pure face, and her silver spangles shining so brightly in the sun—the stick fell from the hands of the old chief. Yes, she was pure, Buhl-Bysee had lied, and if he kept his stick she would bring out that snake again.

"Oh, Cat's-paw," cried Jean, facing him with rapid movements, "are you going to betray Ongon?"

His face was sullen and he set his lips tightly upon each other.

"Then the bad spirit will have it out with you, Cat's-paw. Your men are kept away, this bear led them away. We are all alone now, Cat's-paw, and I must know the truth."

He looked for the first time into her eyes, so blue and true. Something in her voice moved him. Cat's-paw came near and whispered what he thought he had discovered with his little eye shining at her fiercely.

Jean drew back in astonishment. "You say that, Cat's-paw! you will have to prove it—but if it is so, then you are the first one to have guessed it, and you are very wise, and such a foolish Indian to play into the hands of Buhl-Bysee. He never tells you what you have told me! Oh, Cat's-paw, for Ongon's sake, let me plead with you!"

"You are good, pure, it is so!" shouted the old chief, looking again into her eyes, "me see it so!"

She watched the truth dawn upon him, and because he had discovered that she was Ongon's sister she felt that she must not try to frighten him now, as she had planned. There was more in the ugly redman than she had dreamed, and she honored Ongon in the hour of her discovery.

"Cat's-paw, you are better than that box, give me the necklace out of it, and two letters, one from Trenton and the other from Buckingham, you stole them, they burn you while you keep them, they are Ongon's!"

## Ongon

He shook his head.

"Come, I will give you gold for them."

"Me take no gold from you or Ongon," said the old chief.

"Oh, Cat's-paw, has Ongon reached your heart, then I forgive you, and for his sake I will love you, too—come give back Ongon's necklace and letters!"

The old Indian started toward the chest rolling his eyes about his head, but stopped half way. "You tell Ongon he hate Cat's-paw."

"I will never tell him then, Cat's-paw, so long as we shall live," said Jean, stepping to his side and touching his arm assuringly.

Another glance into her eyes convinced the chief, if conviction were wanting, after her word was spoken, and he was finding the treasures. Afterward he watched her face lighten, and her eyes fill with tears—then he was sure that he had her secret.

"Now Cat's-paw, who do you think committed that murder, who killed the soldier—did you see it?"

"No," answered the old chief.

Jean would have clapped her hands at this breaking down of his testimony, but she would not hurt Cat's-paw's feelings now for the world.

"Then who killed the soldier?"

"Not Buhl-Bysee," said Cat's-paw.

"No? Then who?"

"Blue Earth," said the chief, one gleam of happiness crossing his face to have told the truth at last. But this did not last. Weak from the strain, Cat's-paw almost immediately fell into one of his fits and writhed upon the ground.

"Josie, come," cried Jean, softly, running to the door of the tent. "He is in a fit, take the serpent back into the box, we do not need him, nor the bear. Come we will take them to the canoe by the river, the men are waiting."

"Good-bye coilie," murmured the Indian girl, as they put away the serpent for the last time.

It was rapid work, with no time for Jean to think whether to tell Josie what she had learned. The men were ready with the large flat-boat to take the snake and bear to the village.

"Have the snake well cared for," said Jean in her instructions, "and shipped at once to Detroit. My aunt is on the boat by this time at the Calumet?"

"She is Miss ——"

"Hush," cried Jean; "very well, every thing may be removed from Hardscrabble now. Give everything that is left for the

## In the Woods

children to them with Lusette's love, tell them it was a happy time we went with them." She had made every direction as carefully as if she knew before the terrible end that it must come. "And now, Josie, ride in a circle back to Major Trenton, and tell him all is well and that we shall hope to be at the tavern as soon as we can get back from the North trip where we go for some other dear evidence."

They embraced as friends in life or death, and Josie was gone, leaving Lusette alone with the chief. If she had not gone back to help Cat's-paw, Buhl-Bysee would never have had his opportunity. But, for himself, he had come timely. Scarcely had Jean mounted her horse, after bringing water to the old Indian who had slowly regained his power over himself, when the agent tore through the woods riding one horse and leading another.

"Ha!" were his words, "a fine sight, really a fine sight!"

"Which disappears with the secret," cried Jean, loosening her rein, drawing her cloak over her shoulders, and dashing through the same thicket out of which Buhl-Bysee had just crashed.

One glance told Buhl-Bysee that Cat's-paw had made good his threat at last. But the agent did not hesitate. Again the old chief was made the victim of his greatest enemy, the flask of whisky, and Cat's-paw was fired to mount and pursue the girl.

### XXXV

#### IN THE WOODS

Lusette had taken the shortest trail toward the Calumet. It led over open exposure, but she had no choice. Wautoma's escort was not forthcoming, and soon she realized that all depended upon the strength of her horse, because already there was the sound of pursuing feet behind her. For a last resort she had her trusty rapoon, but she never could use that upon Cat's-paw now, she might try to cripple his horse. One glance behind told her it was so, waving his arms excitedly, and raving at her through the distance. She could not understand the change in him, unless Buhl-Bysee had done to him what he had to Wautoma the day he had shot at Major Trenton in the canoe. It was a long ride to escape now, with the chance of Cat's-paw's Indians rushing upon her from the edge of the woods between her and the schooner. But her horse was fresh and her courage unfaltering.

Meanwhile Wautoma heard the yell of Cat's-paw, but was powerless to come to the gypsy's aid. When he had left Bat Eye and his followers bound and in charge of two of his men he had

## Ongon

not dreamed that one of his bucks would turn traitor. But after waiting patiently for the proper time, when the other guard sat down to chaff Bat Eye, according to the mode of his chief, the other found little difficulty in disarming him.

The liberation of the other Indians being accomplished, the boy was left to watch the chaffer.

"Tell Wautoma, he pulled me from the horse at death leap," said the traitor guard to his companion, as he gave him a laugh and disappeared with the rest.

"Creep through the creek bed until the woods, circle to the second, there is Wautoma," said the betraying Indian.

With five of the band Wautoma had taken the advance position, when the rest heard his voice they should know that the danger was greater than he could control. Otherwise they should keep cover and wait. Such his orders. But the yell was not to be forthcoming. Bat Eye was upon him and sitting on his back with two men to each of Wautoma's before the squirrels could bark.

"Gag them," ordered Bat Eye, wiser than Wautoma, and not caring for speech. He was not playing a trick upon Wautoma, but bent upon seeing now what it meant to have had the strategy worked against him.

Soon Bat Eye was favored with the solution. The gypsy appeared riding at breakneck speed, with Cat's-paw hard behind her. The sight made Wautoma groan, for he was permitted to witness it. Whether it pleased Bat Eye to see his uncle pursuing a woman could not be told from his face. He made no sign to help or hinder. The life of the gypsy was now in the nephew's hand, but he did not move.

Her life was within another's power also—Clermont, also well ahorse, was not to prove the serious obstacle to the escape of Jean. Having been warned by Buhl-Bysee that the gypsy was planning the escape of Ongon, the detective, for want of facts, had mounted a pony and was spurring him on lest, after all his careful work, he be baffled by a woman. If Cat's-paws idols were his treasures, Clermont's worship of his success was scarcely less exacting of him. He remembered Lusette's words at the tavern and he now believed her to be on a foolish mission born of a romantic attachment and the desire to circumvent him. The angle of his own direction, when he emerged from the woods and saw Lusette's flight with Cat's-paw pursuing, would give him no trouble to head off the gypsy.

Peacefully the lake stretched to the left to intercept Lusette if she turned in that direction, while riding at anchor near the little

## In the Woods

river was the vessel he had seen coming and going with stone. If a commercial enterprise might be accused of being interested in the welfare of the Indian, Clermont might have suspected the craft that morning. Perhaps if Lusette had imagined that her second pursuer was Clermont she might have turned toward him in relief and security. But she did not know who was the rider signalling to Cat's-paw and bidding him take courage though falling behind. So she kept her course straight toward the vessel.

"Halt, Harry Clemont, or I fire!" A woman's form arose from the bushes in front of the officer of the government and a woman's hand was stretched toward him, not as in the days past, but weighted with an argument she had never dreamed of pointing against him—a loaded weapon.

"Why, Catherine, you here thus, this is strange conduct," exclaimed Clermont in astonishment.

"Not half so strange as your assisting a vicious Indian to ride down a woman," replied Catherine with scorn.

"She is in league with an Indian chief, plotting his escape. Remain here and I will return to you," said Clermont with a glance toward the speeding gypsy.

But his horse was not to obey his spur, for without hesitation Catherine Dale stepped in front of him and fired. The bullet had been well aimed and the horse sank beneath his rider dead.

"The gypsy would scorn to aid Ongon to escape. I swear to you she has no thought of doing so. If you wish to speak to me, hasten to that monster of an Indian and bid him turn from pursuing an innocent girl."

"But I have been told——"

"Foolish man," cried Catherine, bitterly; "if you refuse, I go myself."

"Stay, Catherine, I will stop him."

She turned aside to allow him to pass without looking at him. It was sweeter to watch the girl now hastening on to sure liberty. She had been of service at last, cost what it had, to have faced the man whose horse lay at her feet.

Partly from a woman's tenderness at the thought of having been compelled to take the life of so noble a beast, and partly from the joy of seeing Lusette pass safely beyond the reach of vengeful hands, Catherine Dale knelt in the sand and, laying her head upon that of the horse, for the first time in three years the tears fell fast.

# Ogon

## XXXVI

"CATHERINE, PERHAPS I WAS A FOOL"

"Catherine, after all I cannot but admire you for this." Clermont had found her with her head buried in her arms upon the horse's neck. Her form in grief was so exquisitely beautiful, and the place so wild and out of keeping with the elegance and refinement in which he had always known her, that he could not keep his first resentment. She did not answer him and he spoke again, "I have stopped the Indian and the girl is safe, Catherine, can I do anything more to please you?"

"We cannot be honest and speak the truth to each other without seeming to quarrel," answered Catherine, forcing herself to rise, but her face averted from his.

He cut himself with his riding whip nervously, "Often I have wanted to have one more talk with you since you did not understand me perfectly when we parted," he said slowly. Some great new strength took hold on him even while she turned from him. He had thought to find her passionate and bitter toward him, but now she revolted from their saying unkind things to each other.

"I understood you, Harry—Mr. Clermont—but you understood yourself better than you did me." She could say this to him gently with her womanhood helping. He had failed to meet her because he was without capacity to appreciate a woman's heart. She had sought, once, to give him everything, but in the end he had felt no need of the endowment of her affection.

"I have always been too absorbed in my profession, Cath—Miss Catherine—if you will have it so——"

The old frankness which she had always admired in him caused her to look. "Let us not do as the world does, Harry, but keep the names as a sacred part of the past, however gone forever it may be."

"Thank you," he said, with a readiness born of the same desire to avoid the creation of unnecessary distances between them. "I hate to look out upon the old avenues of life through closed shutters."

Catherine was moved to enter the heart of the meeting at once. "But for the fact that you were so honest it would have been unbearable," she said dreamily "When you came to me asking that our engagement be broken and stating that you feared you had sought me to further your ambition and not because you loved me, it filled me with a nameless horror. But I had at least the comfort

## Catherine, Perhaps I Was a Fool

f picturing in my memory how you stood when you spoke those words."

"Catherine, perhaps I was a fool," said Clermont, striking the end with his whip.

"I thought you were cruel, lately I have thought that you were right," she said, clasping her hands and looking away toward the ship.

"But I cannot even say that," he answered. "Catherine, it has seized me that I am wanting the greatest of the common instincts. At first I was startled and then for your sake I was gladdened because of all that has happened."

Catherine spoke very rapidly, when she answered, with her face averted, but in the same new strength he had felt when she was risen. "It has made me happier to believe that your life would be enriched, even if sometimes saddened, could you know what God has placed in a woman's heart for man. I could never tell you, alas, for a woman's affection is too delicate and fragile to be put in a clinic room for dissection and microscopic revelations. We will unfold in an atmosphere of love, but we can put forth no life for the eyes of a critical eye. I could never tell you what love was."

But she was telling him now—what he had never dreamed of before. Not in so many words, but more through what she was in this moment of tenderness. Somewhere she had found an atmosphere.

"Catherine, you have changed," he said, when their eyes came together.

"Until I want those hollow days that seem to mock me and have made me cry out against heaven, led into the light and cleansed, Harry. Is there no way of our brightening the memory?"

"You had a ring of bitterness," he answered with his honest frankness. "It was natural for one of your nature to recoil upon yourself when the support was taken away. If I tramp upon this flower it has no beauty for either God or man until another spring has hovered over the plant. You were true, Catherine. I can see that the storm has swept your life. It is a strange word for me to say to you, but even the fury of your complaint was designed in order that you might be satisfied at last."

"Harry!" She looked at him with pity in her eyes, he was awakening—too late. With a woman's instinct she saw that he would come to analyze himself as he had her love in days before. "I see you think it will cost me to understand myself," he said with the same evenness always in him whatever the occurrence. "I shall regret



## Ongon

—I even now regret *everything*. I ask not to know what has come into your life. It will be to me to admire and possibly at last to love you as it is given man to love a woman. But it will be a long process, and between lies my love for my work.”

“Stay, speak more kindly of yourself, believe——”

“No, Catherine, even now, standing by your side and hearing your voice again speak kindly, I am being drawn back to my work away from you, away from love. I am even now no longer what I was a moment ago. I can see how my presence chilled your life and shut me from its beauty.”

“But you follow a phantom, Ongon——”

“Is guilty, you cannot shake my belief in the overwhelming evidence against him.”

“You do not even know him, you have never heard him, you have judged him hastily——”

“Yes, I have heard him.”

“Then your life is wanting that faith which is the life of the common law of nations, Harry. In law is it not true that a man is innocent until proved guilty? But with all your learning and success you have not learned to keep faith in character, however upright, if circumstance brings strong contradictions. You are a human blood-hound, and if there is blood——”

She did not need to explain to him that her strong language was that of a friend. “You are a woman, Catherine, given faith to cast a sunshine into the world that it sadly needs. But though you may draw the best life from the darkest characters—I must draw the worst from the best and brightest.”

“But you seem to exult in tracking guilt—even if it were true that Ongon in a moment of anger struck down that man—which I deny!” cried Catherine, springing away from the place she had taken before him.

Again he was frank to speak the truth. “Perhaps I *am* a human blood-hound. And therein I learn that I shall come to suffer. I, being but a force with a nature that fairly revels in overtaking and exposing wrong, do know beforehand that the sin of my turning from our betrothal will surely find me out.”

“But heaven tempers justice with mercy. Oh, Harry, your companionship taught me after our parting to look at my life and my world as wronged and ruined because love died in me. And so I fought heaven—until Ongon taught me, not so much by his words as by his character, that when we have lost love we are blinded to the true relation of things. You are revelling in a miserable eclipse

## Lovers Still

of the truth and do not know it but I must not philosophize in this hour. When you have a weak confidence in men you are made practically inefficient to find out guilt. Your skill may even succeed in finding out enough to hound Ongon to his ruin—but you will thereby aid the really guilty man to escape.

"Let us not part with an argument," said Clermont, abruptly.

"I do not intend to call this a separation, Harry, but if you will escort me over there, I think that we shall find the Indian Wautoma; perhaps in disaster, at least in distress."

### XXXVII

#### LOVERS STILL

Minnetonka had placed a letter in the hands of Ongon who sat under a linden before the lodge with a map of America upon his knees and little Mylo beside him playing contentedly in the grass. "It is from Lusette," said Minnetonka, kneeling to offer the letter temptingly. "From whom, my princess?—ah, from the one who left the pin for our babe. Come closer, my true one, and let me speak to you."

"Thou needest not say anything, Ongon," she answered, clasping a hand of the father's with one of the child's in both of her own. "Minnetonka's happiness is full and her life more than lived."

He looked upon her as always did when she spoke her fear. But never could he dislodge the conviction from her that her life would be taken sometime very quickly.

"Must thou, Minnetonka?"

She answered him by placing her hand reverently over her heart. She had told him this before their marriage and there had been no moment since when she had not lived in preparation for the great parting. Sweet strength to go was her abiding portion and when she thought of it there came over her an almost spiritual beauty.

"Everything Minnetonka has done has been a help to Ongon," he said tenderly. "We have helped our people together."

She bent forward in tender listening over the head of the babe.

"Does Lusette understand our secret?"

"More than Ongon does, I think, my princess," he replied, drawing her to him gently.

"We must have her here again when we can be together—but now her letter," murmured the princess.

He laid it in her hands to open, but she would not have it so.

## Ongon

When he had broken the seal and read the contents, he turned back and read the letter over again aloud.

"*Charged with murder, Ongon, and Cat's-paw a traitor!*" she rested her head upon his arm to read for herself, and then her up-turned face passed with his into the deep of a great strength.

The remainder of the letter was full of its own faith. Lusette would have him give himself up with a request for a trial. He would be proved as blameworthy as he was innocent.

"I understand now why Cat's-paw and that man were looking into the window that night," said Minnetonka.

"Why does she move me so?" he asked, showing that his thought was more upon the gypsy than upon the accusation that Buhl-Bysee had brought against him. "I have never seen her yet——"

"Never seen her, Ongon! Why she—no, she never said that she had seen you—strange, strange, oh, why did I let her go before you came. She wanted to see you, Ongon, but I dared not let her go into the flag-room."

"Tell me again, what did she say, Minnetonka?"

"I found her here near these lindens, she had been speaking your name, *O-n-g-o-n*, so softly, and I loved her for it."

He listened to the story of the night with his hands clasped upon his knees and his eyes staring into the sky.

"She can tell of Ongon's boyhood," was her conclusion; "but brought the lad other news, Minnetonka?"

"That there was to be fighting to-day between Wautoma and Bat Eye," said she quietly.

"I will go," he said, rising and laying aside his other work. "Ongon will give himself up."

Minnetonka accompanied him to the lodge and when he was ready she had unfastened both ponies and was prepared to go with him, Mylo in her arms.

"Even so then, my princess," he said, taking the child, his hand securing the ruby safely; "we will live it together."

As they rode across the sweet-scented prairie and through the vine-tangled woods the straight Indian trail threading the luxuriance of the centuries seemed to have been made for such a worthy coming. And when the blue sky hovered, and the flowers smiled upon them, and the babe cooed to the birds upon the branches why should not they laugh and talk to each other like lovers, half believing that behind the great eyes of Mylo was a spirit perfectly understanding them both?

## Lovers Still

"He knows our secret, Ongon, see how he must look from one to the other of his parents. He is us both!"

"Then Ongon envies him," laughed the father.

"And Minnetonka adores him," responded the mother.

The way led them first through the woods where Wautoma's braves were still waiting for some sign from their chief. But if they had resented the sight of Cat's-paw pursuing Lusette, while they had not been called upon to take a part in the activities, the chagrin was brushed aside by the sight of the chief-king with the princess and the little child. One may even love his king next to himself, and because he understood them, Ongon was part of their ideals and dreams.

They had said that Clermont had been sighted in the next woods and that Cat's-paw was there. Still Wautoma did not send for them and the orders of the day forbade them to stir until the signal was given them. They would remain until Ongon had gone to examine the trouble.

Meanwhile Clermont had accompanied Catherine to the woods to seek for Wautoma and there had found him gagged and humiliated with his five bucks under Bat Eye and the latter's ten.

"We do not allow him to talk," said Bat Eye. "Until Cat's-paw gives his orders, Wautoma is only ears."

"Then I will pour into them that Lusette is safe," cried Catherine to give the Indian rest from his fears.

But poor Wautoma had come to a miserable ending of the glorious strategy that was to more than even things with Bat Eye. It was merciful that he was prevented from speech for it excused him from a sullen refusal to talk.

"What are you going to do?" asked Clermont of Cat's-paw, who was not even looking at the Indians.

"Ugh!" was the sole response.

"Shall you not order these Indians released?" continued Clermont.

"Ugh!"

'Cat's-paw you must, here comes Ongon!' cried Catherine, running to meet Ongon and Minnetonka and seizing the babe from the chief-king's arms lovingly. "The strange nurse cannot quiet the turbulence in the child's breast," she said, leading them forward and pointing to Cat's-paw.

The chief-king thanked her with his eyes for her faith in his presence. "The child can soothe his own rage, if he will but accept his place in the loving arms of his mother;" was his reply in the same French tongue.

## Ongon

The most impressive scene may be the most hopeless, and to Clermont, who had seen Cat's-paw with Buhl-Bysee, nothing could seem more improbable than that the old chief would yield to Ongon when it came to a test. What affinity could there be between the base, treacherous old chief and his fine grained superior who, in a moment of vengeful anger, had slain the soldier? But nobility itself possesses the virtue of kinship. Character cannot be denied the birthright of its influence. Had Buhl-Bysee played upon the avarice that he had found in Cat's-paw until he had worked it into a frenzy? And had passion under the influence of drink conspired against fealty to Ongon? Where are the depths of even the savage sounded? After all was the spiritual altogether perished from Cat's-paw? Or could the personality of a self-true man reach the innermost self of the hardened wretch? Why had Cat's-paw entered into a voluntary relationship under Ongon?

The test was to prove whether Cat's-paw wanted gold more than the integrity of his race. Ongon stood for the Indian, he had undertaken Cat's-paw's development. The vices of a Buhl-Bysee might fascinate Cat's-paw, but it was more cunning for him to outwit himself and turn to Ongon. But if personality is a sweet reasonable ness, it is not a reasoning. Ongon said nothing, Cat's-paw nothing. The door of the flag-room was open for Cat's-paw to quit it for ever. Minnetonka had drawn the cross of gold from her bosom—it was in the palm of Ongon as his hand was outstretched to Cat's-paw.

"In the spring the maple leaves return," said Ongon gently.

And the thought of the final hope of his race drove down the liquor from the brain of the old chief. Gold in the form of the cross had covered the worship of the idol of gold, and Cat's-paw could see clearly to his only salvation. His life was more empty than his treasure chest—only Ongon had helped him to know it. And when Cat's-paw's hand had taken Ongon's, Bat Eye's cut the cords that bound Wautoma's—and every man was on his feet.

"You have won, Cat's-paw, may the Great Spirit keep you." Soon it was to be remembered that such had been Ongon's words to the old chief.

"I congratulate you," said Clermont, bowing to the chief-king.

The signal had been given by the risen Wautoma and now from the other woods had come his band of warriors who stood about the chief-king in a circle.

"I desire the government to proceed with the trial," said Ongon bowing also to Clermont; "you need not fear my people. There will be no uprising; you can take me now, sir."

## A Slave Is Free

If only instead the country could have taken him to its heart and at that late hour believed in the truth of his mission!

### XXXVIII

#### A SLAVE IS FREE

After five days Buhl-Bysee was determined that Cat's-paw should give him the information he desired. Had the ship been scuttled, and if so where had they taken Lusette? How far north had the boat sailed and who kept the girl? He had asked for a soldier from the fort and there had been detailed to his service a tall, bearded Irishman with the wealth of fun in him that the agent preferred for a day's companion.

"Sure," said Buckingham, who had secured the post of valet by grace of Trenton's influence with the commander of the fort, "sure, an' it's together wid the loike of your honor I'm to go?—thin I'll niver take me eyes off of you while you are wid the rid divils." Many a story well told had done more to break down reserve by laughter than all the tortures of rack and thumb-screw combined. Buckingham took neither his eyes nor his ears from their attendance upon the agent. And yet before they had reached Cat's-paw, Buhl-Bysee had set him down for a harmless, ignorant, fun-loving, Indian-hating son of Erin.

"He knows where my girl is," said the agent in confidence. "She got into danger among the Indians and I want to find her. I have been a pretty wild sort of a rover, but when we are married I intend to settle down. She's beautiful—ever see the gypsy?"

Once, he had, without enlarging upon it.

But when they found Cat's-paw and the half-breed rode out with them, the old chief enlarged upon it. "You not have girl, she too good for you; she belong Ongon."

Afterward, on that other morning at four o'clock, when Trenton stood before the minister with Catherine, Buckingham remembered Cat's-paw's words.

"I have come to tell you that you must give me the secret, Cat's-paw, what has been done with the girl—was the ship sunk?"

"Yes."

"And the girl is safe?"

"Yes, me guess."

"You guess, then you don't know?"

"Me guess."

Buckingham was permitted to overhear the conversation, Buhl-

## Ongon

Bysee telling the Indian that he was a Frenchman and could not understand English. Evidently Cat's-paw was telling the truth—he did not know whether Lusette had been saved from the sinking ship or not.

"Cat's-paw," said Buhl-Bysee in the dialect, to throw off Buckingham, "you and I have had many an encounter and you know me. I must have this girl for my wife. She pleases me right well. And then after the big council fire is lighted I am going away never to return, unless it pleases Ongon to have me stay. Nothing will come out of this murder business. Ongon will be found guilty and released. Let us play fair. Then I will help Ongon."

"Ongon no need of Buhl-Bysee," sneered the old Indian.

Hot words followed, with Buhl-Bysee the loser in the argument, the old chief would not divulge where the captivity of Lusette should be. Some general order he had given which he half said he wish he could have recalled after it was too late. The interview would have not been the remembrance of a day had it not been for the ending. Once more Buhl-Bysee's flask was at the throat of his victim and again the demon had come out of it.

The transformation of Cat's-paw was enough to startle Buckingham's strong nerves. The fire almost puffed from the eyes of the Indian as if there had been an explosion within his nature. As before, its raging swept the savage and kindled a fierce desire to do the opposite of what he had intended. But now the struggle against his revealing the great secret to Buhl-Bysee, uniting with the torrent of hellish flames, begot a passion even the agent had not witnessed before.

"Ugh, me put it out, me die cool!"

Before the arm of Buhl-Bysee could reach him, the old man had whirled his pony down the sand, and gathering momentum for the plunge, had whooped his horse about, rushing him into the lake. Wildly splashed and staggered the obedient steed until swimming depths were reached, and then the fiendish yells of the Indian, which had awakened the shores with their madness, were suddenly hushed. The horse was swimming outward with strong limbs that communicated their willingness and power to the savage old man. He was singing and petting his pony without looking behind him, as if already his temper was forgotten and banished forever from his brain. The liquor had made him as one demented, he was riding on to the happy hunting grounds, he sang.

"Indian heap better, Indian heap better," more and more indistinctly came the words to the shore, until in the distance their sound

## The Fatal Massacre Tree

was but a murmur of content. At last the far departure whose breathings are beyond the ken of human ears:—horse and rider had gone down together into the great deep's eternal quiet.

### XXXIX

#### THE FATAL MASSACRE TREE

Many days since the death of Cat's-paw a twittering bird hovered about Buckingham. It was a thrush, very tame, that often flew over the ruins near the lodge once occupied by Ongon and Minnetonka. Buckingham had never thought to speak to any one of a hundred breathings from the forest and prairie, and this was one of them. He became acquainted with the bird—and then it disappeared to return to him no more. That had been before September had come. He would have liked to take it to Ongon and his princess to sing to their prison room and so had sought first to train it. Failing in this, instead every day the freshest flowers from the fields were sent by him when he could not come himself. "John, we must make his prison days his happiest."

And Trenton had understood his friend. "Aye, Buckingham, in the days of the crime against you, you can find now the spring of a greater love. When I see you bringing the myrtle with the red wood-berries and the flowers of their own planting, the picture of your own cell comes before me vividly. It was bare and desolate, aye, for it was the planting time of your joy. Yea, let us make the walls bright for Ongon now."

The roughest soldier of the fort had greeted the chief-king with respectful deference. When Trenton and Buckingham had marked the room that pleased Ongon most, the Sergeant who occupied it, of his own accord, had anticipated any request from the chief-king's friends, and had found a delicate way to relinquish it to the prisoner. Trenton had preferred to have Ongon take one of the brighter rooms in the newer brick building belonging to the officers' part of the fort, but Ongon with a smile had asked instead for the honor of being placed in the old log quarters on the west side of the inclosure. "We can behold our prairies, Major, and the Indians will forgive us for facing westward," Ongon had said, with his arm entwined in Minnetonka's, as they gazed out wistfully over the captivating lands that had been the birthright of the Indian.

Brought up from childhood in the wilds of the beautiful west, the enjoyment of the royal family was understood by officer and private alike, when from day to day the friends of the prisoners



## Ongon

brought them little mementoes, loving surprises, to break the monotony of their confinement before the trial. Every day, with a deference noted by all, Trenton walked with Ongon about the inclosure and delighted in lingering over anything that pleased him. The bastions at the northwest and southeast angles of the fort were favorite places within the modest ramparts, but nothing seemed to hold Ongon so much as the view through the gun holes of the block house at the southwest corner of the palisades.

"Ah, Trenton, I believe you have never needed to use these loop holes against us since the fort was rebuilt in 1816," said Ongon, smiling.

"Only for the refugees last year to peep out to see whether Black Hawk was coming," said Trenton, laughing back.

"Black Hawk is having a safe escort home from the East, I believe," observed Ongon, showing the interest he took in the affairs of the nation.

"Yes, he is safely conducted home. We sent soldiers from Chicago to Green Bay, fearing his reception by the States in which he had made his raid would not be so cordial as that in Baltimore where he outdrew the president as an attraction."

"Ah, we must forget not Black Hawk; those who use the sword shall perish with the sword," said Ongon.

"It is hard to see you in prison when Black Hawk is touring the country," complained Trenton.

"It is harder to see my poor people being ruined body, mind, and soul by this whisky," said Ongon, spurning a small cask with his foot.

"Yes, barrels of the liquor are found all over the town before the very eyes of the commissioners to the treaty, who wink at the sale of the whisky. They now say that the lot over by the slough there"—he pointed to the place which was to be the site of Tremont House—"two years ago was worth a cord of wood, last year a pair of boots, and this year a barrel of whiskey. Liquor is the medium of exchange for the year."

"Yes, yes," was all the chief-king answered.

Meanwhile Buckingham had met another inhabitant of the woods—a tall, powerful Indian with weak eyes and a melancholy face. One day, finding that this Indian could speak and understand English, he had told him a story with a mixture of kind philosophy in it. The Indian had then given his name—Bat Eye. Since then they had become acquainted and visited together nearly every day. Bat Eye told his history. As nephew of Cat's-paw, he had his chieftom

## The Fatal Massacre Tree

encumbered with heirship to many troubles. The old chief's enemies were as the leaves for number, and bitter toward him as the old garlic from which Chicago had its name. They were winking men, if Cat's-paw had left any friends; and their hands had been bony for heaps of the old chief's plunder. He had given them a whole chestful of gold, silver and beads, he said, keeping nothing for himself.

This had made one Buhl-Bysee, agent, angry with him, who claimed at a late hour a share in the distribution unless he should reveal to him certain plans Cat's-paw had left for the year. But Bat Eye would be a man of his promise.

"Why not make friends with Wautoma?" Buckingham had asked him.

Because Wautoma never forgets the day Bat Eye humbled him," was the answer.

"Let me help."

"He is jealous, too. Bat Eye keeps the flag-room in Ongon's absence."

Every problem has its own elements of confusion. Because Bat Eye was so friendly and honest and forsaken, Buckingham never suspected his knowledge of Lusette's place of imprisonment. Bat Eye presented the redman struggling with himself for a moral vantage ground. He had been led to Buckingham to show the white man the need the Indian had of the superior intelligence and spiritual fiber of his white brother. Buckingham remembered Ongon's saying: "I can only explain my love for the Indian by my conviction that the redman is an equal heir of God's eternity." And it had been worth many a walk through lonely trails to Indian tents now since Buckingham had found something of this fire within himself.

Bat Eye would often talk of Ongon—always reverently, yet never with the slightest suggestion of disloyalty to Cat's-paw. Something of ancestral worship had possession of the faithful nephew.

At length Buckingham spoke of the gypsy and told Bat Eye of the need Ongon had of her knowledge to be cleared of the charge of murder. Bat Eye listened silently and said that he would think over what he could do to help. The next day he had solemnly said to Buckingham that he had reliable knowledge of Lusette's being alive and well.

"But Bat Eye promised not to tell where she is seen."

"It does not fight you to hunt her, Bat Eye?"

"No."

"Then she is not so far away as we had thought?"

## Ongon

Bat Eye did not answer.

"Is it possible for us to find her?"

"Not for a year."

"Why?"

"Indian deep."

"We must get word from her for Ongon's sake."

"No."

"Perhaps you can let Wautoma know more than you can me?"

"Send for Wautoma." And so the message had gone to the lodge and two of Wautoma's bucks had hastened to the fort.

"Tell Wautoma to meet me here at the massacre cottonwood by the lake as soon as he can after the entertainment to-night," had been Buckingham's instructions. Then on his old tavern paper he had written the note for Trenton and had enclosed it in a tavern envelope. Thus had run the words, "Meet me at four o'clock at the old place. On track Lusette. Buckingham." The note had gone into the pouch and, as many times before, the pouch had been buried in the sand at the foot of the poplar while Buckingham took an afternoon swim in the lake.

"Ha!" cried Buhl-Bysee, crawling from the grass with Indian stealth, "Blue Earth has tarried his coming to some good purpose, perhaps!" He had heard the directions, but most of all he had seen the burial of the pouch. Rapidly his fingers worked until the sealed envelope was found. Quickly the agent felt in his pocket. Yes, in his folder he had an assortment of tavern envelopes—and here one of this same "CRAP HOUSE" variety! But now the pleasure of finding a similar envelope was nothing in comparison to the joy of discovering the contents of Buckingham's note. "In love and war strategy is never vicious!" Deftly he copied the handwriting of Buckingham, as if he had practised such work many times before. So the letter lay in the pouch addressed and sealed by William Buckingham to Major Trenton with the compliments of Wautoma. Then the pouch had been returned to its sands, tracks obliterated—and Buhl-Bysee had vanished.

There had been an old observation of Craps that like a game of chess, so is life—"Most of its defeats come," he often said, "when mortals are nearest the victory. In two moves we say, we shall win—and in the next we are checkmated. None is the fault other than that the Anglo-Saxon who invented the game is blinded to its intricacies by his own overcharge of enthusiasm. When in sight of the goal we forget there is one other man always against us whose interests are opposed to our winning."

## Influence Offered

But other events were to go before ere Buckingham was to lay himself down at the foot of the cottonwood and with his head resting in sleep where Buhl-Bysee's fingers had been. Buckingham, innocent of the scene upon which the sun would rise on the morrow, might be foiled as others before him. Yet brighter hours and other thoughts were to precede the fateful hour—even though Buhl-Bysee had his place in them also.

### XL

#### INFLUENCE OFFERED

It was the day of the culmination of Buhl-Bysee's plans when he should have the reins in his hands. For some time he had perceived that the influence of Ongon over his chiefs was founded upon a good scheme. Properly managed it could be made a great success. Ongon had failed because his closest advisers could not see as far as he. It had been a great stroke for Ongon to get arrested, the agent observed, for thereby the chief-king attracted attention to his methods, and was the more likely to gain that capital of brains which was necessary for the future. Therefore he was moved to come before Ongon with his most matured plan and confess that he understood him as none other.

"I have made it sure that we shall not be interrupted to-day," said the agent, when in the presence of Ongon.

There was one flash from the eyes of the prisoner that his room had been entered without knocking, but he bade Buhl-Bysee to be satisfied with no further show of resentment.

"Cat's-paw is dead," said Buhl-Bysee regretfully. "While riding with a soldier and myself he met his end some six weeks ago."

"Yes, I have been told," said Ongon. "Cat's-paw was a brave chief. In his day none were swifter or more feared."

"He died having completed his testimony against you," observed Buhl-Bysee.

Ongon smoothed the cloth upon the table and rearranged the covers in the pitcher without answering.

"But I begin to understand you, chief-king, and the charge of guilt can be removed by influence."

"Ongon is innocent," replied the prisoner quietly.

"Perhaps, but already as the condemned, but will the chief-king listen?"

"The Indian never interrupts when a man will speak on," replied

## Ongon

Ongon with the gentle forbearance that always kept the storm quiet within him.

"I begin to understand you, chief-king, I see now that your influence will be lasting. The lodge which you call your kingdom has a strong hold upon your followers. They are mighty, and from every tribe. Make me chief in Cat's-paw's place and I will secure your pardon. Together we will build an empire within the republic, rich, grand, surpassing the dreams of the Orient. You will save your honor, your wife and child will have the taint removed from your name—perhaps we can even prove you innocent, and upon you and your children will descend majesty in the presence of democracy."

"A man has first tempted Ongon,"—he had arisen and was looking out of the window, with Buhl-Bysee at his side, hands open to receive the prospect, eyes searching the chief-king's face.

"The government will give large sums of money to the Indians——" urged the agent.

"The white man interrupts," said Ongon quietly.

"Nay, speak on, chief-king," replied the commissioner with a sweep of his hand towards the prairie, and talking with his insinuating eyes.

"A man first tempts Ongon to consider the effect of his life upon his family after his death."

"Even so," whispered Buhl-Bysee.

"Sir, let me briefly explain. Ongon was the victim of a cruel wrong in his childhood. There was nothing in life but to bear it. Then he found that by it was a way to live perhaps a truer life, and better for many, than if Ongon had never suffered. What if when he had been wronged he should give his life to the task made possible by the cruel crime against him?—Ongon can have no better wish for his child than that the child shall accept any fate brought him through what happens to his father as a promise of heaven's favor. You are a white man, Buhl-Bysee, tell me, did not Valley Forge endear Washington to American hearts for all time? Ongon would rather be loved at last by a great people whose conscience has been touched by the redman's problem, than possess all the honor the present may heap upon him. Or he would rather be worthy of such love."

"Ah, but the white man will have nothing but scorn for you, Ongon." Buhl-Bysee was still near him.

"The trial is not over yet," replied Ongon with the same firm quietness.

## Fierce Blows

"The source of your hope is sinking sand. Where is the gypsy now?" asked Buhl-Bysee with a sneer.

"Ongon has reason to believe in Providence until his work is done," replied the chief-king, not deigning to hear his reference to Jean.

But Buhl-Bysee saw him advancing to open the door. "You reject me then, as a chief, who am come to you friendly and well advised?"

"I know the manner of Cat's-paw's death," said Ongon. "It repents the soldier who served you as valet that day, that he ever undertook to find himself as the aid of Buhl-Bysee. Beware." Something in the eye of the powerful Indian made the agent put a silence on his lips from giving utterance to the words he had almost dared.

### XLI

#### FIERCE BLOWS

When Buhl-Bysee had gotten himself out and had entered the dark, narrow hall leading from Ongon's room to the stairs, he could not tell to whom the approaching figure belonged until he was face to face with Trenton. The way was straight, and when the commissioner would not give passage first, Trenton drew himself close to the wall. But Buhl-Bysee was in no hurry to take the clear path thus offered to him, and rested upon his walking stick quite in a way mocking the officer's leaning upon his.

"We are very civil," said the agent with a cold sneer.

"I bear you no ill-will," said Trenton, "will you be so kind as to take the way?"

"Like to know a secret?" leered Buhl-Bysee; "there is little hope now that your gypsy sailor and her boat will ever return. Two months, ha! two months and no word from Lusette, ha! ha! ha!"

"Do you mean to insinuate——"

"Oh, nothing, nothing at all, only how easy for one to have stolen aboard and hid in the hold to scuttle the ship in the night, ha! ha!"

"And the girl, tell me man of the girl?" demanded Trenton.

Buhl-Bysee had surmised rightly. Trenton had not been told as much as his friends knew. "How anxious we are now to speak to each other—aren't we my dear fellow? We couldn't let the girl sink just in that manner, could we?" He was caressing the head of his cane on the palm of his left hand, and now stood aside to let Trenton pass.

## Ongon

"Buhl-Bysee, when you married Malite did you find happiness? Did she not awake to the fact that you married not from love but to spite me? Remember the misery of a woman who drew back into herself and began to die day by day when she found she could not live without love. You remember the end. Spared to repeat your power."

"You plead like a woman," sneered Buhl-Bysee. "But promise me"—his face had instantly become a most engaging smile—"promise me that you will never marry the girl and I promise that she shall come back safe of harm from me."

Trenton's face had passed from anxiety to contempt. "If you meant to convey to me the impression that you know where the gypsy is, I see you lied."

Twice the agent struck at the head of the soldier, and twice the blow was skilfully parried. Then when Buhl-Bysee sought to draw his pistol, Trenton at last took the offensive, and gave blow in return for blow. Still the agent talked. "That!"—which Trenton parried—"that!"—which he turned aside with the same skill—"that!"—and Trenton, who had spoken no word, had found the blow that sent Buhl-Bysee sprawling to the floor with his foot upon the agent's throat.

"Confess!" said Trenton, who had lifted his cane for a second blow.

"I lied!" wheezed the helpless man.

Trenton lowered his stick, and rapped three times with it upon the floor. The call brought a quick response from below.

"Officer, take this man out, and see that he never returns unaccompanied by a soldier." Then Trenton went in to see Ongon, his knock having opened the door at which the chief-king was standing instantly.

## XLII

### "MY PEOPLE"

Sound of the clash of canes had come to Ongon, for the fire was in his eyes, and when he grasped Trenton's hand the spark was running through his being. With a consent mutually wordless the two men locked arms and drew to the window. From the view they could see eight yoke of oxen as silently holding their heads toward the sail boat from the East which they had drawn across the sand from the lake to the river.

"She's from Oswego, the first private yacht to enter the Chicago

## “My People”

River,” came up from below in a conversation between ox-driver and citizen; “she’s owned by three brothers.”

“Her name is significant,” was the reply. The prisoner and his companion had already observed the bright letters on the boat—“Westward Ho.”

“And everything from the East has a charm for us.” It was Ongon who had spoken first, and the sentiment coming from him and with such intensity, startled Trenton. He looked up, but could not find words to interrupt the tide of chastened passion in the man. But when Buhl-Bysee, grand and pompous, was seen hailing the captain of the yacht, who sent a boat to the shore to bring the agent aboard, the scene added a fire that broke through reserve.

“I heard him strike you, Trenton. Only for my promise not to leave this room without permission, I should have been out—but I knew that you could take care of yourself.” He spoke the words with a suppression of feeling such as Trenton had never witnessed in him before.

“It was not the personal encounter—if one could only defend others as well,” said Trenton, who had turned back to the window they had left at the sight of Buhl-Bysee. He leaned his head heavily upon his hands and when he looked up the sail had disappeared.

“I begin to be moved,” said the chief-king, half to himself as he walked to the darkest end of the room.

When Trenton directed his eyes to see the meaning of Ongon’s passionate utterance, he grasped for the first time the truth of the man. The chief-king’s eyes were as if he had opened a door to a dark furnace wherein the coals were at white heat. Trenton also had stiffened to his greatest height, standing unconsciously as if on guard at his angle of events. “It would be magnificent once to see Ongon on fire,” he said, half offering Ongon his cane to see him break it on the table.

“Would you believe it, Trenton,” said Ongon, “I sometimes fancy my life will end so—perhaps in the same cause that has just engaged you. After all, our affections are our heritage, and life is the sum of its passion.” He was holding the edge of the table as if it were a ledge on a precipice to whose sides he had picked his way to seek some jewel carried to an eagle’s nest.

“You do not really know why we came to blows?” cried Trenton, stepping to Ongon’s side with his hand upon his shoulder and his eyes as steadfastly upon the chief-king’s as the Indian’s were upon the floor.

“I fancy it is Lusette.” His tone was the heart of gentleness.



## Ongon

and when he looked up his eyes were calm—but it was the quiet at the centre of a cyclone. No language could have told Trenton better the lengths to which Ongon would go for this girl.

"Yes." The two at last had spoken her name to each other.

Their eyes met as only men's can whose love is wrapped about the same woman. "Yes, her mysterious absence," repeated Trenton; "from no source are we able to get any word since she sailed—but I was not aware——"

In his hesitation Ongon finished the sentence—"Of her movements being known to me? Let us sit down, Trenton, for there are things that I have wanted you to know for some time."

Ogon drew a small buckskin pouch from his belt and laid it upon the table, his fingers playing with the strings but not unfastening them. "Suppose, Trenton," he began in a deep voice, "suppose that Ongon is not an Indian?"

"Oh, my friend!" Trenton had started up, but sank back again into his chair. It was his turn to hold to the edges of the table.

"Hardly could it be known." Ongon was baring his arm as he spoke, and to Trenton it might still be counted as belonging at least to a half-breed Indian of wonderful strength. "When I was a child of six, on the banks of the Mississippi, I overheard the chief, my father, say that I was not his child, that I was white, and that he had taken me to raise. When I was sixteen he died, leaving me his chiefdom—and also a knowledge of something of my history. I had been washed ashore from a shipwreck, a white babe less than three years of age. His own son had died, my face resembled his. He took me to a medicine man to have me painted Indian. But the medicine man knew more than is wont. He saturated my blood with silver in the form of the nitrate. The sun, and I suppose naturally dark and smooth skin free from beard, with Indian features, did the rest."

"Oh, Ongon, you a victim of such a deed—I can begin to understand now the pathos of your life, and why you have carried an atmosphere about you greater than anything you have ever said or done!"

"At first it made me terribly severe. I took delight in inflicting punishment when justice demanded it. Until the sweetest and most beautiful of women came into my life. Then when through Minnetonka I understood the Indian nature a passion of admiration and helpfulness seized me. Ah, if true white men and women had to be Indians a life time, what would not the Indians come to be!" In the thought of the Indian's greatness, the newer passion was for the

## “My People”

moment stilled in Ongon, and he was his old self again. He had paused only for a second to feel the truth of what he was about to say and then he continued:

“They have a legend among the redmen prophetic of themselves. An old man—the Indian—sat alone with his fuel gone, and his fire low. Just as it was dying a youth—the white man—entered with cheeks of red and eyes of pleasure and his lips a beautiful smile.

“‘Ah my son,’ said the old man, greeting him, ‘I am glad to see you. Let us spend the evening together and entertain each other with our deeds.’ Reaching down a curiously carved pipe from the side of the lodge, and filling it with the choicest tobacco, he handed it to his guest, and then taking a pipe himself, and puffing out a few clouds of smoke he thus began to speak:

“‘I breathe, and the streams cease to flow, and become hard and brittle as crystal.’

“‘I breathe,’ answered the youth, ‘and the flowers spring up in my path.’

“‘I shake my hoary locks,’ rejoined the old man, ‘and the leaves fall and whirl away and the earth is snow, the birds seek the distant clime, and the beasts fly to the shelter of the forest and caves.’

“‘I toss my sunny curls,’ said the youth, ‘and the soft showers are upon the earth, the plants gently raise their heads, the birds warble amidst the groves, and all nature rejoices.’ Then the youth gazed upon the old man, and his gaunt visage and lank form lost their outlines, the old man was transformed, and the blue bird began to chirp and sing on the roof of the lodge, the stream to murmur along its course, and the sweet scent of violets to laden the air.’”

As he finished Ongon rose and stretched his hand across the table just out of the reach of his friend’s grasp—“And Trenton, why not? Why should not the white man who is the strong younger brother help transform the Indian? My people only need the strong man and time.”

To Trenton the majesty of Ongon’s words “my people” was an eloquence of the heart he never forgot.

“But I digress,” said Ongon, looking down at the buckskin pouch again. Trenton could not forget the change that came over Ongon with the words, nor the vehemence that made his voice scarcely audible. “A girl, brave, winsome, loving, sent of heaven, acquainted with my story, has touched these prairies with her feet, and lent her beauty to these woodlands. And Trenton for me! for me!”

“And when you look upon her face you thank heaven that you live in the same world,” said the soldier.

## Ongon

"I never saw her!" cried Ongon.

Trenton arose in surprise that grew to astonishment. "Never saw her, never saw her, why, Ongon, I thought——"

But Ongon only looked as if he would have the light that came into the soldier's face perpetuated. "Trenton, I have thought of late that you loved Lusette and it has given me joy for you; my hand that you may win, if——"

The chief-king had arisen and, taking from the pouch the ruby Jean had left for Mylo, bent over the soldier with the stone in his hand. "This was her mother's, she left word to me, and I think our mothers and sisters, and the gypsy is my own cousin."

And it pleased the men to decorate each other with the flowers from the pitcher, as if that might make them feel thereafter their oneness in the presence of every blossom that grew. Again they locked arms as at the first. But the sound of laughter and many voices was in the hall and Trenton remembered the pretty mission on which he had come at the direction of Catherine Dale.

### XLIII

#### A PROCESSION OF HAPPY FACES

The door opened upon a procession of happy faces. First came four of Wautoma's braves—bearing in their hands lengths of canvas painted to represent the forest and prairie—Catherine's work, and by her direction fastened to slender pine frames. Afterwards followed two more bucks with armsful of flowers gathered at the lodge, succeeded by Wautoma wrapped in a handsome blanket with a flute in his hands. In a mystery of gay decorations, all Indian costume, came Catherine and Josie, bouncing Mylo between them. Last to enter but first to greet Ongon who stood in wonderment, tripped Minnetonka.

"We have come to take you out into our beautiful Indian land," she said putting her hands in Jean's way, which she had loved the more since understanding her mission.

"And always with the same charm disclosing a wealth of preciousness," said Ongon touching lightly the beautiful chaplet of roses on his princess' head.

"Minnetonka is the preferred," said Catherine with a flush of pleasure at the sight of Ongon's tender affection for his wife.

"Always," said the chief-king, bowing as much with his eyes as with his head and body. If Ongon had been slow to understand, the quick placing of the decorations would have told him the secret.

## A Procession of Happy Faces

They had come in a new way to entertain his hours. This time a representation of an Indian wooing was to be enacted before him.

"In a drama of three acts," announced Catherine, the stagemaster, "Me-Big-Chief will seek a bride from among the handsome ladies present."

It was Wautoma's hour. "Corn planting done. Me-Big-Chief go fine dressed, these feathers in his hair, to crane dance, seek bride, squaw." Wautoma takes his time to make Big Chief's passage through the trail seem long, and pains to tell again and again that the ladies do the planting.

But it was not to be a wearisome drama, and not at all make believe, for the crane dance feast, under the handsome ladies' suggestion, was a real repast. Their deft hands were quickly spreading the table with the viands they had brought. Everything, even to the apples, oranges, and dried grapes, Minnetonka explained, had been brought by a quick relay of runners with these letters from the various chiefs. The sparkling soda water was from the Ute Pass in Colorado, and the letter from this chief had been written in the Garden of the Gods. This maize had grown beside the Falls of Minnehaha.

"It was parched, Ongon, by the falls of much laughter at the lodge," said Minnetonka, most beautiful ever when pausing in her quick action to kneel for a moment beside her husband and child.

Josie stood holding Trenton's arm, and dancing with delight at Ongon's pleasure. "We worked it up when you first came here," she explained with a courtesy to Ongon when his eye fell upon her beaming face.

"My hospitable great hearted Indians," said Ongon with his arm about Minnetonka's waist; "from every note is loyalty and devotion, my princess."

But a glamour must now be over the eating and presently Ongon felt the witchery of glances being directed towards Wautoma, hero of the play. Who among the willing maidens should gain Me-Big-Chief's attention?

At last when the merry supper was ended, by a concert of action between Trenton and Wautoma, not in the play, Trenton took the flute and the young chief seized the unsuspecting Josie by the waist. The arrangement was not at all to be settled so soon for Josie was sly, and supple and elusive.

"Big Chief will now tell his mother of his love and his mother will tell the maiden's mother," announced the stagemaster.

And then Catherine, as mother of Wautoma, drew from Big

## Ongon

Chief more than he had meant to tell or had uttered in the rehearsals. He had loved the maiden ever since he had seen her, it was not his fault that the courting had to be so slow. And now Catherine, with courtesy to Ongon and a sly glance towards Trenton, tells Minnetonka, the mother of Jota, all that is meant for a girl to have won a Big Chief's affection. The hour is appointed between the mothers when Big Chief is to go to the lodge while all are asleep, or pretending so to be.

The scene is announced to change to evening, and as it is night outside when the light in the room is put out company and audience are all in the dark. But the wall is being tapped and they know Big Chief is approaching stealthily. The provided match is struck and Big Chief soon discovers where Jota is sleeping. He holds the candle close to his face that she may know him. Then he places it within her reach. She does not blow it out. He is to retire—a rejected suitor. Then the scene is morning. Romeo is not allowed to go in the lodge, for it has no balcony. But he is permitted to place himself in full view of the tent, flute in hand and play. His music lures out one by one, first Catherine then Minnetonka to know whether he is playing for them. The tune changes to let them know that he is not playing for either of them. Now his intended appears in the door and the *courting* tune is continued until she returns to the lodge. The music stops. Big Chief is to venture again with matches and candle at night.

"Is it just for a year?" asks Jota, springing from her couch the second night when the candle has been placed within reach. She stands very real before Me-Big-Chief in a bewitching night robe trimmed with Catherine's lace, long, lent with all its splendor for the occasion to make the moment ideal.

"Usually they try each other for a year and if they don't get on they are free," replies Big Chief to the too earnest question of Jota.

"But is *this* just for but a year?" Jota is more than playing and Big Chief had better take care.

But he will die reckless, "Yes, just for but a year," he says very grave.

Very well, the light will not go out. Jota is inexorable or some other unbreakable will. He must go through an *extra* act. And then the third night Jota has decided that it had best not go out at *all*.

"But Josie, Wautoma was only in fun," pleaded the real chief, in order to get the light out.

However the real drama was roguishly uncertain—he should tease best who teased last.

## A Procession of Happy Faces

"But you wrote your name in your blood with mine," protested Wautoma.

"But this is Me-Big-Chief's play, and I am the maiden Jota," cried Josie dancing off to Trenton's side.

"Will anybody moralize?" asked Trenton with a smile.

None but Wautoma, and that by showing a good nature at last and acknowledging that the fun was against him.

Then Josie, pleased with Wautoma and repentant in herself, asked permission to teach them all the Dakotah Dog Dance, explaining however that her people seldom made a repast of the dog any more, though they once did.

### DAKOTAH DOG DANCE



They were not penitential measures and there was enough of Josie's spirit supplementing the want of English vivacity in the rhythm to make the dance catching. Even Trenton's ear had at last become cultured to the beauties of the Indian classics, rough hewed as they were, and so until the time of parting they romped all in sly and savagely mincing steps.

"Following Me-Big-Chief it's a virtue to be able to put big feeling into small progress," laughed Trenton to Catherine his partner, "so far as that might be, we would call this in military parlance a jerking out of marked time."

Catherine's answer went dancing through his ears, "Just think we shall not know to whom we belong after we are through!"

"Shall we belong to somebody?"

But Catherine had not heard his question. How pretty she had grown! The beautiful lines of her figure had found a sweet symphony in every thing about her now.

"I shall write out this music to remember what we have put into it," said Catherine looking at Trenton in the old, artistic way.

# Ongon

## XLIV

### FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

It was remembered afterward how the simple evening's merriment came to an end. Some one had said laughingly that everybody had better say goodnight since nobody had chosen anybody. Playful words these, that left a spirit of greeting at parting—but so fraught with other meaning before dawn! The night held scarcely a ray of light and Catherine told Trenton that she was smiling upon him in the dark. Yet why should there be a tremor in her voice almost immediately?

"I have a strange feeling, Major John; let us ride around the palisades and give them a serenade for their blessing before we leave." When they had done so and the light came to the window in answer to Wautoma's flute, Ongon was holding the lamp before the princess' face.

"We can see your face, too, to remember it," cried Catherine eagerly.

"We would like to plunge into the night with you," replied Minnetonka, a happy dawn to you all!"

"Farewell!"

"Farewell!"

But Ongon had said nothing.

It was then that the sound of other horses' feet fell on their ear. Two Indians of Wautoma's band had come with a message for their chief, flashing out a lantern as they drew near. There was a hurried conversation apart, and then Wautoma, with an air of vast importance, came back to say that he would ride on with his braves and meet them later at the south ford. They need not hurry, if they would be so kind, and the lantern would be left with them. They could flash it at the fords. Josie had taken the lantern from her lover, and sought to read his face, but it was unfathomable.

"Ugh, Me-Big-Chief, yet we stay," cried the Dakotahn giving it up.

Then they were gone.

"Catherine, what is love?" asked the girl after twirling the light until it no longer tripped upon the speeding horsemen.

"Love is to discover that when a man has an acid appetite we are not to feed him all his life on sweet delicacies," said Catherine.

"That was for you, Major Trenton," laughed the girl quickly, catching Catherine's glance at the soldier.

## Friendship and Love

"She means that a woman's love is bounded by man's capacity, Josie," admitted Trenton.

"And her own capacity to sweetly give him sour things," added Catherine.

"Is love an understanding then?" continued the girl; "I think I understand Wautoma."

"Yes, I think you do, Josie," answered Catherine.

There was something in the darkness of the night to provoke thoughts that foreran events belonging to it. Why will one be thinking pleasantly of a half-forgotten friend when just then the postman is bringing a letter up the walk announcing that friend's marriage, or inheritance of a fortune, or perhaps, best of all, his own most welcome self is coming? Mystery of mysteries and yet feelings do prepare the way for life's facts. So it was with Catherine Dale and John Trenton.

"How pleasant the sound of the water in the darkness," cried Catherine when they had trotted at last to the fords. "Let us linger in the middle of the stream and talk!"

The horses were as willing to put their heads together while Catherine gave expression to the undercurrent that had been in her mind all the evening. "Do you know, Major Trenton, before I met Ongon, I never got any further into my life than if I had picked up a strange novel and tried to understand the thread of its story by reading an isolated page?"

Trenton could imagine. There had been a gloomy time once when he could not keep the fact from Ongon that he thought the world was moving backward.

"Did you?" exclaimed Catherine, touching his arm lightly. "I always thought you were the kind of a man that would die in grim silence rather than make one complaint."

"If it were a matter of dying perhaps a fellow could glory in it, but when there is a slow living out of things that madden—then there's rebellion."

"And Ongon said to you?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"He asked me to take a canoe ride with him kindly bringing my compass along. 'Which way does the river flow here, Major?' 'East,' I replied, 'And here?' 'Not a great variation from south,' I answered without suspicion. But after sundry such questions, I caught the drift of his purpose and was ready for the main inquiry—'Well which way *does* the Chicago River run, Major?' He knew he



## Ongon

did not need to ask it, but I confessed that it depended, however the *general trend* was east. It was just Ongon's way to bring out woodland logic, but honestly it cleared me up most wonderfully. And all this day long I have been rejoicing in the general trend of events."

"Satisfactory in the end," said Catherine softly.

Then their thoughts turned nearer the one most in their minds but least spoken of during the evening. The loneliness brought them too close to the thought of Lusette to exclude her now. They spoke of what she had risked because she loved Ongon and talked of the satisfaction there was in living near one who could love much. They agreed that heaven sent few great lovers as it sent few great geniuses into each generation. Passing fancy there was, hasty marrying, broken ability. To Catherine there was no explanation why a woman should not want to dress for her husband, think fondly of him all the day long, look for his coming—even as the maiden for her lover. And Trenton acknowledged that even a soldier was never himself apart from the woman he loved.

"I fear we walk so often flat-footed into men's lives," said Catherine. "But that, I suppose, no woman could do who has really once entered softly into a man's heart. Oh, thrice happy is the man who has been wedded to the woman of his heart's love —and yet is not Providence most often against it—at least not hindering what could have been lightly prevented?"

"Do you know," said Trenton, drawing away from the bitterness into which they were both descending, "I think Buckingham will find the way to Lusette at last."

"Why did he not come to-night, Major?" asked Catherine, at the mention of Buckingham's name.

"He does not feel worthy to participate in simple home joys, Miss Catherine; "he must earn his way, so to speak, back to the equality we all enjoy at birth, ere he can feel right."

"He does value home joys then, do you really think?" Catherine looked up quickly.

"He was out five nights to my knowledge, helping to gather those notes from the chiefs that Ongon was so proud of to-night," replied Trenton.

"Perhaps the spirits talk of men at night as you are talking of him," said Josie, touched when the conversation has run on to the dangers Buckingham had entered into with his characteristic cheerfulness and ability to bury himself.

"Major Trenton, I used to despise a humble man," observed Catherine.

## Friendship and Love

"And then how the soldier caught it," murmured Trenton.

"I never despised you, I did not understand you," answered Catherine.

"He was simply not the one for you to love," said Josie going back to definitions.

"Conversation must not be exact science," laughed Trenton, meeting Catherine's eyes in the half-dark.

"I hated everybody when my father wanted me to marry Blue Earth, until Lusette came," said Josie.

"Josie, you are the bravest of all in mentioning her name. You really believe a way shall be found to bring her back?"

"Yes."

"Speaking of Buckingham," said Trenton, pressing Josie's hand, "he has changed so rapidly and grown so fast I am ashamed to think of my poor progress. He has become proud to have won hearty friends, but so sorry that while he was held guilty he grew hard spirited and reckless."

"There is a touch of that in us all," said Catherine, remembering the little while before and how good fellowship had carried them beyond the feeling. Dreamily she watched Josie flash the light against the water of the stream beneath their feet.

"Buckingham used to be full of proverbs and wise saws and now he seldom speaks," observed Trenton.

"Not that he has ceased to be a philosopher, Major John?"

"Hardly that, but with more reverence for it, because his estimate of his knowledge grows less."

"I should think," said Josie, "the angels would want to help such a man—Catherine, if I were you I would marry him."

"I sometimes think he will never marry," said Catherine quietly, but putting her arm about Josie. "Sometimes, for all we have said to-night, Josie, highest love is to marry for duty rather than from choice."

"Be in league with the angels and good spirits, Miss Catherine," had been all that Trenton had ventured.

Then they were all looking at the shadows that ogred from the lantern upon the waters. "Feels like being a spirit without a body, to be here in the dead of night," said Catherine—"hark!"

"They are coming," said Josie, whose quick ear knew the sound of Wautoma's horse.

They were on the east bank to meet him when he halted. He had ridden far and furiously, from the foam on his steed. "Major Trenton, a letter from Buckingham," said the chief, hand-

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ing him a sealed envelope. It was one of the old hotel envelopes with the name of Craps in the upper left corner, but it was not the printing over which Trenton had lingered, although his eye went back to the envelope after he had read the contents of the letter.

"Is it bad news?" asked Catherine, when Trenton passed his hand heavily across his forehead, as if to press back great pain. The soldier answered by giving her the letter without a word.

"Lusette is alive and can be saved if you are willing to make the sacrifice. Catherine must go with you, to whom, to save Lusette from an awful death, you must be married at once. If Catherine will consent to the step you and she together can accomplish the deliverance. But it must be before morning. Do not wait to see me as I cannot be there in time for the marriage. I know the cost. But the saving of Lusette means the only hope for Ongon. You can be conducted forward at four in the morning, if you are willing to be married. Buckingham."

Keeping nothing from Josie, Catherine had given her the letter, and was turning away with clasped hands. Trenton sat motionless. To save two lives: "it is sometimes highest love to marry from duty rather than from personal choice"; he was not sure of Lusette's love; Catherine had always been a fair and wonderful being to him; if he had never met Lusette—but would he not be marrying for Lusette?—no, for Ongon as well. His eye fell upon the profile of Catherine against the night. Surely she seemed a beautiful creation designed for great, strong deeds of love; to claim her as his wife, to build his life with her—the problem was gentle harshness. If Trenton were to learn that Lusette was dead, would not he hail the advent of such an hour? Josie's question, What is love, arose in his mind. Love is earth's best substitute for heaven, he could have said then—love after all was another being, able to lend substance to dreams and some definite reality and correspondence to definite longings. In marrying Catherine could he keep the reverence and pleasure he had in her friendship, would the rights of a husband mar the gifts now belonging to their less intimate association?

"Major John—John——" she said, in a low, sweet voice that sounded like Lusette and all womanhood speaking.

He rode to her side and on with her, taking the lantern from Josie as she motioned. When she paused they were away from the sight or sound of any voice. He could not pass to infinity with her then, as he had so readily with Jean at once. But the thought was bright comfort then that perhaps were an angel to appear to

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man, the influence might have been something like the gypsy's, too rarely beautiful to be his forever. There was a barrier between Catherine and himself—but rather one of degree perhaps than of kind. He felt that he could live in a world of power with Catherine. They would be strong man and strong woman revealing to each other the creative ability of God. Arguments of attachment may not be love—but they are attachment.

"Catherine," he said, drawing out upon the great sea of the bitter-sweet necessity.

"Does the whole night seem to have been preparing us for this?"

"God only knows."

"If we refuse?"

"Catherine, I swear to you, in a way I have always loved you."

By the pressure of her hand she could say the same to him. Her eyes were even now confessing that there was nothing she would not do if they must take the step. The full dower of her womanhood would be waiting—if it were right. He lifted the hand to his lips and kissed the fingers fervently.

She seized the lantern again and put it behind her and they were alone together in the dark. "Would duty sanctify the marriage to you, John?"

"We could esteem each other and know by all the light that heaven gave us that we followed the most loving choice left us," he answered slowly.

"We can help our friends and it will not be hard to live for them, Major John. Do you know that the Dales have a record that once a Dale married a Trenton and made her a Dale."

"We are the sole survivors of our ancient houses," he said with a smile. "Shall now the Dales be altogether lost?"

The light was before her face again for answer.

"In the end perhaps we shall find that our marriage was ordained in heaven—Catherine, will you be my wife?"

"At four I am willing."

"Wautoma will have time to ride for the minister and I for the legal authority."

And Catherine sealed the brief betrothal with the first kiss she had given man.

# Ogon

## XLV

### SHIPWRECKED

When the Indian canoes had surrounded the little schooner after it had been scuttled in the night, and had compelled the prisoners to enter the boats, Jean had laughed the redmen out of the idea of binding her. "Hughgh!" she had cried, holding her thrush in her arms and whistling like a mocking-bird until it had waked to song and she could laugh merrily over its out-pitching her. Then she had called several of the chiefs by name, and none had been so harsh as to seize her; instead she had taken a paddle from one of her captors to help to the shore.

"How long are we to be prisoners?" was her question when her boat was first to land, not by her strength to push in the water so much as by her keenness to make a race out of a catastrophe. And the bird had helped by fluttering on her shoulder as if in urgent haste to reach the shore.

"Forever," was the dusky reply.

"Impossible!" she cried; "when we reach the happy hunting grounds you may be my prisoners. Listen now and I will tell you of the white buffalo." Down they sat at her feet to hear the story. What was the hurry to the savages if she was not in a haste?

"Long years before the Dakotahs had ponies two young men were sent from the camp in search of buffalo. In their hunt they saw a beautiful young white woman. One of the Indians was bad, the other good, who said This is a holy woman. And she said to the good man, I will follow you to your village. As she drew near to the village she was met by medicine men and carried on a blanket. It was noticed while being carried that she held a pipe high in the air toward the sun. A large fire was built in the lodge and everybody circled about the beautiful woman. She said, I bring you this sacred pipe by which you will tell, when it grows heavier, that buffalo are near and plenty. Then she presented the pipe to the chief medicine man of the Dakotahs with much good advice. They treated her well until she vanished out of sight. Then it was found that she was a beautiful white buffalo who took that shape to give them this pipe. And who do you think I am?"

"You will not run away?" asked the chief.

"How long are we to be kept?"

"Cat's-paw said a year, but he will see you and tell you all," said the leader of the band in the dialect.

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"Where?"

"We take you to the windings by the side of the flag-room."

Lusette clapped her hands. "We will not run away for a year unless Cat's-paw tells us, neither my aunt, nor these good sailors, for I see that if you let one of us go, you know that he would tell.

"They go north to the caves," was the response.

"But what have I done?"

"You have witched the serpent."

"Poor coilie!"

"And you have hurt Cat's-paw."

"I did not scare him, you don't mean that? Cat's-paw is no woman!"

Her courage, together, perhaps, with Cat's-paw's instructions that they should do her no harm, won the night. Save for the forced marches, Jean and her aunt were treated with the consideration of allies of rank. At the flag-room Jean learned from the lips of Bat Eye that his uncle was dead. Much secrecy should be over his village for the year commanded, then she and all should go free.

"Much secrecy—I will be secret a year," she promised; "but, by and by, I shall want just one promise from you, Bat Eye. I will not tell you now until we are acquainted."

Every day she had told him stories and when they had larger liberty to go about through the underground rooms, she had been shown of Bat Eye a recess in which was the stolen picture of Wautoma!

"Huddled away for the prison of our pilgrimage, auntie—oh, Bat Eye, your rival!" She had found on the instant that he was jealous of Wautoma and had been ever since the artist had chosen him for her model. That was why the Indians did not like to have their picture taken, she said. Jealous savages are inconvenient people to have together, and they knew it, she now believed.

"Quick Step may take the picture to her room," Bat Eye, had said trustingly. That had been Bat Eye's name for her, and Jean had many a waltz before her aunt over the nomenclature.

And so they had become acquainted with Catherine's first conception of the Indian problem in the form of the fierce Wautoma.

"She ought to marry Major Trenton, auntie," Jean had said one day when they had passed from portrait to painter. "She could unfold those possibilities prophesied in his hand."

Then she talked of the soldier and his strong, deep eyes, while walking back and forth within the long hall-like room that Ongom

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had built of cedar with a massive pillar in the center supporting the ceiling. But Ongon was always the end of every conversation. "See how he made these dear little air shafts, Aunt Hardscrabble—perfect ventilation! You could never feel damp in such a polished sub-chamber of scented woods! These seats are all Grecian uprightness to fit his straight, strong back. Here he has studied, perhaps, and mastered his passions. Here he has dreamed that perhaps some people like us were in existence, and—I would like to greet him first in this room!"

Had any one ridden with her in her flight from Cat's-paw he would have found that this triumphant spirit was with her then and her aunt had known that it had never departed from her since. Until the shock of events that forever changed her life, even before it had become fixed, she was the bonnie girl who had laughingly thrown the flowers into the *cache* they had found on the shore. These were the care-free days of her life, happy yet in the unbroken march of events in her favor. And when Bat Eye added the nearly finished madonna of Catherine's affection, she would sit for hours to tell what Ongon would see in the great, dark eyes, the perfect nose, the oval splendor of Minnetonka's face.

"I almost wish that God had made me an Indian, auntie—yet who could laugh like Josie!—and I'd want to be a laughing Indian to turn up at the pow-wows and palaverings with a demure and fastidious grin of enjoyment! I wonder whether anybody has missed us? How they will be talking of the poor gypsies when we are domiciled in the costliest palace in the West! And how others will call it mad folly for a girl to venture forth with only an Aunt Hardscrabble for the voyage—and warn their children never to go and do likewise! You remember the school-teacher's stone in the Opecquon burial ground, auntie? How dear old Winchester would look now, and how the staid old Scotch-Irish people would never have dreamed that its traveling daughters did conceive and dare to penetrate the wilds of the west, etc., etc.! When I was a child I used to touch the old stone of that young wife of the schoolmaster and their 'two childer' and vow always to be good and stay at home and never run into any danger that my children might not die early. I don't believe that I ever thought it possible for me to die young."

Then her aunt would tell again the history of their sturdy forefathers, and the deeds they had done, the danger and privations they had passed through to build their names and fortunes sure.

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"And you, Jean, have inherited all the dauntless enthusiasms of them all!"

"And their goodnesses, auntie," she added laughingly.

"It has been easy for you to be good and cheerful, full of faith and enterprise, Jean, whose ancestors' faith was like the great oaks surrounding their Opecquon meeting-house."

"Where Washington used to worship," said the girl with true Virginian pride. "Oh, dear old road to Staunton! Auntie, if Ongon ever rides down the sweet old turnpike and drinks water from all the wells out from Winchester to where our father and mother lie buried——!"

"Jean, do you remember where Lord Fairfax died in Winchester, when he heard of Cornwallis' surrender to Washington at Yorktown?" the tone was thoughtful.

"Yes, auntie, dear!"

"And do you remember what you said when we drove down from Winchester to White Post to view the little house to which Lord Fairfax, disappointed in love in England, withdrew, and in which he lived testily with the Indians about him?"

"That Jean would chirp to the end of her days, come what disaster?—yes, auntie."

"Suppose then, my darling, that you should come to love a good true man whose love should be given to another, could you yet remain the same blithe, winsome girl, so full of song the day through?"

Jean knelt very close. "If love were taken from me, auntie, I should rage like Wautoma in that picture, and feel worse than those ruins look behind his back—and above us. Then Jean would want to paint; a study of patience, it should be—of dark hours alone with the thought of a magnificent soul wasted"—she smiled even sadly—"when it might have been otherwise. Lord Fairfax should come and go in closer companionship. We are all made alike, auntie. Then I should think of Ongon's braveheartedness and he should be as a priest-king to poor Jean."

"Ah, you are changed, my darling, so soon—God grant that the trial never come!"

Jean had been true interpreter of the vision she saw within herself should the clouds become so lowering. But the glimpse was not suffered to be more than momentary. Too sunny was the girl's unbelief that such a future were possible to her.



# Ongon

## XLVI

### TAKING THE MARRIAGE VOW

At the lodge there had been little sleep. Exactly at four, Wautoma had come with the missionary who was to perform the wedding ceremony. Trenton had obtained the permit of the marriage and had brought it to Catherine. "Last year I should have had to ride to Peoria," he said, "for the authority, at least two years ago."

His face, though calm, was haggard. Catherine's beautiful womanhood had upborne him only while in her presence. When he rode alone afterward, he felt that he was leaning upon her goodness without a strength of his own love. About to forego it forever, during his ride he had been brought face to face with the intensity of his love for Lusette. It was not true that without having met her he would have come to love Catherine. He realized that unless the gypsy had come into his life nothing could have really awakened true love. His boyish attachment for Malite had been sincere, his regard for Catherine was a deep admiration that had ripened into friendship, but only once had he loved. If a man marry his friend, he has a friend for his wife, to whom he can honestly confide all things—even the truth that the Creator made man to enter the holy of holies to love one finite being better than himself. Friendship marriages, for a home, for influence, from admiration, because of situations, may be even necessities, but they are never unities. The very time Trenton had believed Ongon and Lusette drawn to each other by the irresistible magnet of true love had been long enough to stamp upon Trenton the horror of a mistaken marriage. Now when learning the truth from Ongon's lips, to be plunged into the fatal necessity from which afterward there could be no withdrawal for either of them had worn upon his soul and made it lean.

He would marry her as they had agreed even if every step they took together thereafter cried out, Mistake, mistake. If there existed one woman who could make a harmony out of such exquisite suffering it was Catherine. Thenceforth he would fight every regret as if he were battling with the Indians again. After that the grim resolution upbore him.

But when Catherine spoke to him upon his return, her presence awakened in him the feeling he had found at midnight. He felt that he must train her to him in gratitude for all she was in her

## Taking the Marriage Vow

beautiful womanliness to take the place of that which was to be denied him. But he forebore to more than kiss her hand.

"I had no wedding dress, but have put on the very best in my trousseau, sir," she said, smoothing with her hands the hollows in his cheeks and shaking her head at him determinedly. "Do you like it?" It was a pink watered silk creation with pointed folds in the body, bows of gauze ribbon, and short sleeves with epaulets trimmed with blonde, she told him, when he was admiring her more than the gown, for all its prettiness. "My *Colonnes Satinees*," she said smiling, "a gypsy came when I had it made and was first trying it on, and she said I should wear it on an occasion of greatest joyfulness. So I selected it this morning, sir Major."

"Catherine, you are very beautiful to me, I shall try to give you all my heart——"

"Listen, I had a dream, John, though I do not know that I have been asleep to-night. I will not tell it to you now, but it shall be all right. We must go to the altar at the old ruins—for so I dreamed."

And so they went. Josie had gone before to decorate the spot with fern flowers and to weep over it with an almost broken heart. The Indian messenger had come to take them to the trail that should lead them to Lusette, and the lanterns guided the bridal procession from the lodge along the trail under the lindens, where Trenton brushed the same vine that had once steadied the form of Lusette, and past the hazel copse where she fain had waited to see Ongon.

Behind another part of the ruin a traveler, just dismounted from his horse that he had left where Trenton had tied his charger on the day he had first met Catherine, had hidden at the sight of the approaching lanterns. Eagerly this dismounted traveler watched the procession come out of the distance until his eyes made sure of the number and identity of the party. "Trenton and Catherine," he muttered strangely—"flowers, a minister, good God, a bridal procession, they are to be married!"

The company had entered and filled the ruins before the traveler had withdrawn his hands from his face to look again. The minister was standing with the prayer book in his hand. Now he was reading the solemn words. If none would now declare reason why this man and this woman should not be made man and wife, let him forever hold his peace. The traveler started but did not move. "Wilt thou, Trenton, have this woman to be thy lawful wife; wilt

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thou love her, honor her, cherish her, and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live?"

The pause was only momentary, though it seemed longer, then to the stranger came the deep, hollow words, "I will."

"Wilt thou, Catherine, take this man to be thy husband——"

Her lips were parted at the end to speak when there was a flutter in the branches and a beautiful thrush dropped upon the bosom of Catherine and gave a little morning song of jubilation.

Again the traveler started but seemed rooted to the ground on which he stood. His hands were still clasped in pain.

The interruption had disconcerted the minister and he had repeated the question solemnly from the beginning.

"I will," rang out her voice with clear distinctness, but it was a statement she was determined upon making rather than an answer to the question propounded. "I *will* tell you of the dream. Last night I thought I heard a voice say to me in a dream, 'Go thou to the altar in the morning at the ruins, and if heaven forbids this marriage, the thrush of Lusette will fly to thy bosom ere it is too late, and thou shalt know that the letter of Buckingham's was mistaken. Judge you now all, sirs, my duty.'"

Now the stranger emerged from the shadows, and advanced toward the bridal circle. It was William Buckingham. "I beg your pardon for venturing upon this scene uninvited, but I overheard my name in connection with a letter. Having had the same strange dream of a thrush coming with a message at these ruins, and not being able to banish the impression from my mind, I rode hither with all haste only to find this strange scene——"

"Strange, Buckingham, did you say, sent you not a letter demanding it?"

"I, what Trenton, how?"

"Sent you not that Lusette was surely alive and well?"

"I did."

"This?"

Buckingham took the piece of paper from the hand of the soldier, and when he had read it, they saw from his face that it was a forgery.

"Wautoma!"

The chief came forward promptly.

"Is this the letter Mr. Buckingham gave you?"

"It is."

"Where did you stop on the way?"

"No place."

## Another Danger Ahead

"Hold, Trenton," said Buckingham, "I remember, it was out of my hands at the cottonwood tree for half an hour, then there was time for this dastardly crime."

"Your indiscretion has led almost to a tragedy of errors," said the missionary, "unless this man and this woman still agree——"

"Occasion for haste being removed, I would prefer to be led to the altar in my mother's orange blossoms," said Catherine demurely.

Josie having embraced Trenton with no show of disapproval from Wautoma, had a whisper for Catherine's ear that was worth following, for together they tripped out of the ruins into the trail, Catherine making the courtesy before they disappeared.

### CHAPTER XLVII

#### ANOTHER DANGER AHEAD

It was well that Buckingham and Trenton whispered what they had to say to each other. Having again explained the vividness of his dream, the former recounted briefly what had delayed his reaching the ruins sooner. A sound of voices had interrupted him when he went for his horse. One was Buhl-Bysee's, who spoke first and rapidly, as if he must make some distant point after convincing the other man. The latter's voice Buckingham was sure he had heard somewhere before, but as yet he had racked his brain in vain for the owner.

"The gypsy is away, Josie's father is here, you paid him the money for the girl——' the agent was arguing. Both interrupted each other frequently.

"But the girl——"

"Is not of age. I tell you man, it's the thing to do. Her father is here for the council that begins to-morrow. I will do my best to get things through with in the morning, and then everybody will go home and you can take her and make her your wife."

"I hardly want to do that," objected the other.

"But you must, Blue Earth.' I stayed only long enough to discover that Blue Earth had been guilty of something or other and then I crept across the stretch to where my horse was tethered," concluded Buckingham.

Trenton had been told by Josie the story she had related Catherine on board the schooner and he now recounted it to Buckingham. From this they drew the most immediate and necessary conclusion. The council must be prolonged to give them time to gain further information.

## Ongon

"Marrying people seems to be Buhl-Bysee's forte now, Major; once upon a time——"

Trenton pressed his friend's hand gently without replying. For some time they sat together in silence upon one of the fallen timbers.

"That thrush belonged to Lusette," said Trenton at length.

"Did it! then perhaps the girl is somewhere in this vicinity— Bat Eye did not deny it, Major."

They went over all that Buckingham could remember of Bat Eye's words. Why would it be useless to try to discover Lusette's place of imprisonment for a year? And why did Bat Eye tell something when he could not tell everything? And still more, how came it that Bat Eye had said only after some hesitation that no communication could be received from Lusette?

"My conviction," said Trenton, "is that Bat Eye is either more of a man or else a greater knave than I ever took him for."

"More of a man," said Buckingham.

"Then we must cultivate him," said Trenton with a smile.

"Perhaps he knows that it will take just a year to do that," rejoined Buckingham.

It was Josie who interrupted them with a hasty breakfast on a tray. She sat at their feet and looked up into their eyes with parted lips. "Say it, Josie?" said Trenton with a smile.

"It was for Ongon, Catherine was willing, for Ongon's sake, even to die for him." She needed not to add that her love was extended also to Lusette. But she had spoken the whole truth— Ongon's life had seemed to command the sacrifice and Catherine had been willing to make it.

"None need ever lean in vain upon the strength of Catherine Dale," said Trenton with deep reverence.

"Amen," said Buckingham, hoarsely.

## XLVIII

### THE COUNCIL FIRE

Ongon had requested Buckingham and Trenton to abide with him a few moments, for he had something he wished to say to them.

"I have not done much," began the chief-king sadly, "and it may be that brief life shall be my portion. The flag-room with its banners must perish from this place. To-day the nations are round about us, but the Indian tents must be folded away and our

## 'The Council Fire

people be scattered. This earth is too small for roaming states. As Powhatan is only a memory in Virginia, so the time must come when this Chicago, though Indian its name, will have citizens who will scarce know that the Indians have ever lived here. My friends, do a little to carry on my work. You will see where Ongon has made mistakes. But you will find that his heart was loving and when he looks into your faces he knows that he has not lived unloved by the best and bravest of men. Go patiently: love every creature in the world. It is a great universe, worthy of the lofty design of a supreme and allwise Ruler. Be not discouraged by the council-fire of to-day—look at the effulgence of the counsels of God."

"Ongon, we have loved you, speak not of leaving us."

"Aye, we cannot be lost, dear friends, long ago it was written that one dead yet speaks. We shall live in each other's memories, no matter who goes first. Let me say to you I could not have lived my life apart from this little testament. Its aid has been my strength. Sent a long way, and not so long ago, by some Parisian boys who had been converted through the painting of a picture—I have never been able to find who the painter or what the painting, it matters not—this little book helped to carry forward what my princess by her faith had brought to me. Friends, when a man's wife has restored him heaven she is as one of the angels to him. Who brings us to Christ has begotten for himself or herself an eternal love like none other on earth."

When the friends had departed, they talked together of the deep solemnity upon Ongon. So strong, so young, so magnificent, yet he had spoken as if his time were short.

"I remember," said Trenton, "how he said to me that he might end his life on fire. It will be sacred fire. Do you know, I think his love for Lusette and his gratitude to her for her seeking him consumes him. Every thing in his life has fitted him for such love. Truly he yearns to be loved."

"Aye, the sensitive, sacrificing man, made tender by his bruises, cries out for the balm of love," admitted Buckingham.

"Here, Buckingham, is my hand. No man can go in Ongon's path, or do his work, but we can follow his master-mind in a humble way."

So the two friends grasped hands as they passed through the muddy torn-up town where clapboard and plank houses were rising on every side. Others, too, were wending their way toward the large open shed on the green meadow opposite the fort on the north

## Ongon

side of the river. Sharpers, peddlars, grog-sellers, contractors, creditors, agents, lawyers, merchants, visitors, soldiers—all eager to catch a glimpse of the famous chiefs invited by the government from the far and near.

The cloudy night had dawned a fair day. The commissioners, honorable men, none of them accused of bargaining with the Indians for self-profit, took the upper end of the inclosure. Opposite them the two-score chieftains. Buhl-Bysee opened the council by stating that as the Great Father in Washington had heard that the Indians wished to sell their land he had sent commissioners to treat with them. Promptly Wautoma was on his feet. "The Great Father in Washington must have seen a bad bird that told him a lie; far from wishing to sell their land they wanted to keep it."

But the commissioners were nothing daunted. "Nevertheless, as they had come together for a council they must take the matter into consideration." Then was explained the desire of the Great Father. Poor parent, to have his wish so nodded against.

"This mighty lake on which the birchen canoe had been paddled," Buhl-Bysee explained, "must now see the great ships walking over its broad waters. When the Black Hawk had been east with his son, Tommy Hawk"—the speaker paused for paleface smiles—"it had been explained that the great villagers of Washington and Philadelphia and New York needed grain to feed them and wood to keep them warm. Therefore already the dutiful sons of the Great Father in Washington were obeying him and the Indian children must be good too. It had cost Illinois six hundred thousand dollars to pay its militia for serving in Black Hawk's war and they must never have another war."

The young chiefs, and those who were not tipsy, looked stolidly at the rafters supporting the roof of the shed. War was their best excitement and they had never been furnished with any other sufficient open-air entertainment. The Great Father wanted to take away all his red children's playthings.

Bat Eye was holding Wautoma in consultation in the dialect, whispering in his ear rapidly, "Buhl-Bysee is bad agent. Bat Eye saw lanterns last night at the ruins. He hid to see what doing. Then he found others were in the bushes near him—Buhl-Bysee and Blue Earth. They were talking against Buckingham. Some time Blue Earth had done great bad against Buckingham, did Wautoma know what?"

"Buckingham always good," averred the young chief.

"Bad agent said that Buckingham used to keep tavern, that he

## Every Day the Signal Gun

had met him there, but could not place him, but lately he had remembered; he had thought he was in prison."

At length in the meantime the commissioners seemed to be weary of the long silence given deferentially by the Indian to the speeches of the paleface, for Buhl-Bysee had repeated the wish of the Great Father and asked the Indian chiefs for their opinions,

Wautoma arose, looked at the sky, and saw a few wandering clouds. The eyes of the other chiefs followed his. Heads were giving general savage consent to the plan in the mind of the young Ojibway. "Brothers, it is not clear enough for so solemn a counsel," spoke the radiantly red Wautoma, "let us adjourn until the day is bright."

And with these words it is recorded that straightway the council adjourned *sine die*.

### CHAPTER XLIX

#### EVERY DAY THE SIGNAL GUN

Afterwards there seemed to be no possibility of bringing the Indians together again. They could be seen arguing under every bush, or racing two on a pony, or lifting knives in drunken brawls, or mumbling through fierce war dances, but every day the signal gun from the fort gave notice in vain of an assemblage of chiefs at the council fire. One day when a messenger would be sent to inquire why, when the Great Father in Washington had made a feast for his children, they refused to come, the Indians would make answer that a great chief was yet absent; without him they could not reason to the end. Another day the messenger was told that it was too cloudy; they should know the Indian never does important business except the sky be clear. Once Buhl-Bysee was angered by being told that Wautoma was absent at the fort on a visit to see Ongon, and that therefore they could not come. Then Buhl-Bysee, at Josie's suggestion, was as frightened as Cat's-paw by the sight of the snake, by being told they were in communication with Blue Earth to-day and the matter was too important to drop. Buckingham meanwhile had laid his plans well, that he assented to the message for, thanks to him, Blue Earth had disappeared out of Buhl-Bysee's reach. The agent needed not to know of a dark night when Wautoma's bucks circled in the old death leap about Blue Earth, and with flaming fire-brands tore from him a confession. These things belonged rather to private than to governmental affairs.



## Ongon

But at last, on the twenty-first of September, the redmen signified their willingness, under pressure, to heed the signal gun.

The council, held under the same shed on the north side of the Chicago, was opened by a commissioner who wished to know why he and his colleagues were called to the council. But the onus of the meeting was not to be upon the Indian, and so he rejoined by asking why the Great Father in Washington had called his red children together. That was the end of diplomacy; drink, and threat not to play with their Father, and a general ignorance of the terms of the treaty had brought on a savage earnestness.

It was a picture of desolation. The sun was setting upon the backs of the Indians as the documents of the treaty were brought forth for the signatures of the chiefs. The pale light of the east, toward which the redman had always loved to sit when in council, gave scarcely a ray to lighten up the dark, somber, sorrowful faces of the redmen. But the glorious sun was setting full in the faces of the triumphant commissioners.

So was signed the Indian's evacuation of Chicago and his relinquishment of the millions of acres there around.

The encampment was broken. Into the deep, black, narrow trails running to the north and west little trains of loaded ponies were falling, led by sad-hearted Indians with their squaws and children and wolfish dogs. Soon all must go. The Senate of the United States would not ratify all of the treaty. But this is history, and we are following a few lives. Perhaps they speak in parables.

## L

### AT LAST THE TRUTH

Twice Clermont had seen Catherine. Each time his devotion for his profession was a vaster passion than could be his regard for woman. As the day approached for the trial of Ongon he avoided a third meeting; for though Catherine had said little, he remembered always afterward how much her eyes had said. Her life was not cowed and broken now by a sense of his power. He had known the day when she had clung to the very cruelty of his passion for his work when as his betrothed she needed him.

But now her eyes when they met his were a great calm sweeping past him like the steady currents of a mighty stream—of which he was but an eddy on an idle shore. She cared for him still, but with pity. Her life might try to upbear his, but only as the majestic river bears a piece of summer driftwood on its surface. Her eyes.

## At Last the Truth

were depths beyond him. When his own sought to fathom them, they rebounded back to him, like things of cork, too dead for the liquid fulness of life.

Therefore he shunned Catherine and gave himself the more to the case that was to restore him the power he had lost. He even hoped Catherine would attend the trial, for he had seen her disappointment when the cruelty of the Indian's fate settled upon everybody at the close of the counsel. Woman, Clermont believed, was as strong as the support on which she leaned was stable. With the proofs of Ongon's guilt that hero-worship episode would pass, and she would creep back toward him, and then he must marry Catherine. At forty he knew his mind sufficiently. In his way she was indispensable to him.

At last the trial. When the brick quarters at the fort were filled with an audience of officers and witnesses, paleface and Indian. The mess-hall finally was necessary to accommodate the crowd. In silence Ongon was brought in walking hand in hand with Minnetonka. His simple dignity, her tender, graceful beauty, made them seem rather as illustrious guests, in whose honor they had assembled, than as the guilty victims of a day of anger.

Clermont had anticipated the effect of their entrance upon the judge and all, and had directed the lawyer for the government to invite Ongon to make some opening speech. That would betray the want of balance to his mind better than any argument and constitute the first count against him. Generally the government agents have amused themselves by sacrificing at the altar of the Indian's self importance and oratorical fervor by granting them a talking time at the outset before the important matters should follow. Let it be so on this occasion. So, when Ongon had been seated by the side of his princess, and in the affection of at least the ladies of the audience was almost established, he was asked to talk about his faith in the Indians.

It was explained that this chief has often confessed that his father had been a Dakotah chieftain, and that by his foresight Ongon had been educated under the Roman Catholics. Therefore his learning.

Everybody had heard that this was a celebrated orator, and the motion of the counsel for prosecution drew forth an applause of eager sentiment. It was fair, very fair, to let the chief-king speak for himself!

In breathless stillness Ongon had risen. Just the tremor in his deep voice with the wideness of the prairie in it, too, and the

## Ongon

mighty sighing of the forest, held their ears with fascination. "When the children of the Great Spirit, the Breath-Master, whom our white brother calls the Lord God, desire a great and noble thing, the Great Spirit will finally give it to them, for he dwells in his own success, and wishes his children freely to take part with him."

Clermont and his lawyers exchanged agreeable glances, the Indian was beginning above the heads, he had the exaltation of one who dwelt in the sky. But nothing so moves the common people as the voice of him who has borne rule. The king of any people, speaking truly, carries a majesty to his hearers. Was Catherine feeling as Clermont!

"Have you ever," continued Ongon, "had for days a hard task that kept you indoors until you sighed for a little breath of nature? And have you gone some evening, dragging yourself perhaps to the lake to drink in the Great Spirit's fulness, only to find yourself so tired that the very roll of the waves seemed to wash the last strength from your nerves and you fell into an exhausted sleep? But in the morning as you awoke the sun was stealing over the great waters, while into you, to meet the splendor, had crept the power infinitely to enjoy the refreshing glory! Then did not your spirit dance with the waters, wing its flight with the birds and rise with the sun to feel as if all nature were the bride of the soul and adorned for the spirit's high race to an infinite goal? Sirs, I think myself happy to be permitted to say, I have seen it, the Indian is a *child*, not a *sport* of Heaven, a being of flesh and blood and promise, not a curious specimen of the wild woods. Often in the morning from this fortress, looking westward over this fair prairie, the princess and I have thought some day this shall be a city vast and perhaps lofty, tall buildings rising where now the modest violet peeps from the prairie grass. Through such buildings at last will move the developed and civilized Indian. None then shall be ashamed that they helped speed the day."

"Ongon, your enthusiasm has swept you off your feet," interrupted the counsel for the government, with a coarse smile, "Chicago may become a vast city, but scarcely very high. It is to be built upon quicksands, you know." Then he thought to his honor, the court, that they had heard sufficiently from the chief-king.

"I would like to know, sir, whether you are the author of this?" continued the barrister when Ongon had taken his seat immediately upon the lawyer's restiveness.

The paper handed to Ongon was recognized as his own, though the chief-king smiled at the use which was to be made of it. "Flee

## At Last the Truth

from the garish life" the attorney began to read in a sanctimonious voice adjudged to be suitable setting to show the contradictions, "Flee from the garish life of the whites. Conquer your own natures and the time will come when you will conquer the paleface. Keep before your eyes the day when Indian art and Indian music, your oratory and your redman's power shall sweep down the idols of the white man. You may come on a day to live in the richest quarters of this city, and to invite the paleface to feast with you upon the spoils wherewith you have spoiled him."

"These are your words you say, Ongon?"

The chief-king was seen to bow his assent.

"Then, your honor," continued the attorney, "we beg to call the court's attention to the fact that a man may be a noble fanatic, yet dangerous, and that this man has tremendously strong affections for that which he deems belonging to his race. This, we submit, will have its bearing in this case."

Then was mapped out the plan of the prosecution. First it would be shown that Ongon as an Indian inherited all the temper and characteristics of the Indian. Then they would exhibit how innumerable were the cases where the redman's temper had been known to strike down an adversary with swift vengeance. And lastly, proofs would be furnished the court that this man in a wrath of vengeance slew Corporal Smith in the field south of the fort's current bushes by the cemetery toward the cottonwood of massacre infamy.

The plan was logical. Clermont handed counsel the first paper. "Ongon did you write these words?" asked the attorney.

The chief-king acknowledged them, again with a faint notion of a smile.

"Then, your honor, they read: 'The Indian has no patience with stopping to look at your nose when you sneer at his leggings. He would rather have your hair to grin upon at his leisure.' There, your honor, and gentlemen, is the acknowledged handwriting of this man in which he deliberately counsels scalping. Ah, you say, he writes only in fun. And yet were I to relate to you the struggle we had to obtain this communication—how it was dropped at night from the room of the prisoner, and how an Indian seized it and ran, until suspicion was aroused in the breast of one of our honorable commissioners of the late treaty, and the savage was caught with this and other important papers—aye, were we but gifted with the tongue of a Cicero or a Demosthenes——!"

Ongon and Minnetonka's eyes met in mutual gentleness, he had

## Ongon

no retort to make, some flash of scorn, that was all the barrister could arouse.

On this was built a great well-buttressed point, that on a *slight* provocation the prisoner had counseled scalping—might not a bullet then be advocated in return for the death of a beloved child? The counsel for the government next advanced to ask Ongon whether he had not given orders for an Indian to be killed who had murdered another.

He had.

"Your honor," said the counsel for defense, "we object. The status of the Indian makes him an alien government within a republic. Our own government has authorized and expects the Indian chieftain to enforce law and order within their tribes. If Ongon had not ordered the execution of Half Wing, of whom the prosecution is now about to speak, he would have been guilty of vacating his authority and thus violating the moral and Indian code, life for life."

The battle between the lawyers over the point raised was finally settled by the court's ordering the next point. He had ruled the evidence about Half Wing out of the hearing.

That Ongon was an Indian with all the Indian's characteristics was proved by the prisoner's words, acts, looks, deeds. Now the horrors of Black Hawk's war were laid at the door of Indian nature. The redman was painted with all his feathers, his tomahawks, his pride, his savage temper. "Think of having an Indian to please at breakfast, my good dames, and to slavishly serve by day, and humor by night!"

Great is oratory, therefore this speech could never be reported. Sufficient that some pitied poor Minnetonka for her hardships, as the skeleton was hinted at in their domestic closet.

Then was laid the scene of the murder. A lonely spot above the lake. A soldier who was belied by Ongon to have taken the life of his darling boy. The soldier is pacing at his post of duty. Far away from home, he stands protecting the lives of others whose homes have been broken up and who now fear the advent of Black Hawk to the village of Chicago. Ongon knows the soldier's hour of service. At dusk he steals upon the watcher, and with angry words upbraids him for his cruelty—then sends the innocent man into eternity. A stifled cry is heard. Reputable chiefs hurry as they happen to pass. They meet Ongon, he had blood on his garments. He says that he has found a man dying of a bullet wound. Together they go back. The soldier is wishing to speak.

## At Last the Truth

"Ongon, Ongon——" Cat's-paw bends over to listen.

"Ongon, Ongon is guilty," Cat's-paw has sworn he heard the dying man whisper. Another chief here present, for Cat's-paw is dead, swears to the statement. Here is Cat's-paw's signature to his own affidavit, however. And Cat's-paw, be it remembered, was one of Ongon's trusted braves. It was not as if it were any enemy his friend testifies against him.

Afterwards they had found the pistol in the field, bloody.

"Ongon, is this your weapon?"

"It is."

"Did you throw it into the field?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"At the head of the murderer, not having it loaded."

Counsel for prosecution threw up its horrified hands at such falsehood in the face of overwhelming evidence. Such proofs ought to make a man confess of themselves!

"Would the prisoner take the stand?"

Thus far he had been permitted to sit beside the princess, now he must be put in the prisoner's box.

"Does the prisoner recognize this blouse?"

Ongon bowed assent.

"Did you not wear it on that evening?"

Again the affirmative.

"How came this blood?—from the dead man's wound?—exactly."

The bloody garment was shown at every angle and then passed around.

"You buried it near the lodge?"

"Yes."

"And in order that the blood might not excite others?"

"Yes."

"You intended to have it washed?"

"Yes."

"But never dreamed that you would be suspected and so took your time?"

"Yes."

So went on the questionings until the chain of evidence seemed complete. Left quite in such way that the defense could only strengthen it when they came to try to break it down.

"Your honor, we have known these truths many days, but have delayed prosecution principally to have all of our witnesses here, as

## Ongon

well as to give the defense time to secure its counter testimony. We rest the case at this point asking for the conviction of the prisoner for manslaughter."

Chance had given Catherine a seat opposite Clermont, she did not meet his eyes.

"Your honor," said the counsel for the defense, rising slowly and somewhat wearily, "we beg the court's permission to bring in our principal witness veiled."

Catherine noticed the start in Buhl-Bysee's eyes, but Clermont thought she had not looked up.

A slender form, covered from head to foot, was led into the room and given a seat between Trenton and Buckingham. On a question it was ruled out of order to permit the witness to remain since he was not to testify first. Therefore the veiled figure was led away again.

Catherine was the one first called to the stand by the counsel for Ongon. She was very pale, but there was a fascination of beauty in her face that filled the room with its power. Clermont had not dreamed to have her against him and was biting his lips with displeasure. He had not wanted one who might be his wife to go down with Ongon.

"Your honor, our witness has a letter to read."

She arose with the unfolded sheet in her hand, and courtesied to Ongon first, and then to Minnetonka. A woman's rapid sentences with a woman's tender emphasis made the letter vivid and brought the writer's soul before them all.

"Know ye men and women assembled to meet Ongon. In a far Virginian valley, where the peaceful Shenandoah runs down to meet the great Potomac, is a little burial ground by the side of an old stone church with an ancient grove of oaks between. There lie the brave and the beautiful, sleeping. It has an Indian name, the Opecquon. Indian names are all about it. Simple are the tombs, for the ancestors and friends of the settlers of Kentucky—and of Chicago, lie buried there. On one little marble slab are these words

'Sacred to the Memory  
of  
Lawrence and Margaret Ames  
and Their Son  
Ogden.'

"Beyond the tides of change and circumstance lies the young husband and his loving wife, who lost their lives, and were found

## At Last the Truth

and are buried side by side. But the waves that washed their bodies to the shore brought not the body of little Ogden. An Indian tells the story in the letter also sent to you of the mother's sad cry that reached the chief in the darkness. 'Ogden, oh my precious child, Ogden!' Already the Indian was making through the forest with the child repeating to him softly the drowning mother's cry, as he understood it——" Catherine paused, the tears were in her eyes, the words could scarcely have been repeated with such pathos by other lips than the mother's——

"'Ongon, oh my child, Ongon.'"

And now Catherine had crossed the floor to the prisoner's box to let him read the words and take the rings from her hand.

"Oh, sirs," cried Ongon rising, "let me say it first among men, she is not here, she cannot say it—she is my sister and I am the son of Colonel Lawrence and Lusette Jean Ames!" No one forbade his going to the side of the princess to kneel there as a child as he showed her again the initials of his mother and the tiny band that once had encircled his own finger. Then he hastened back amidst the sound of women weeping to the prisoner's box that he might not delay the court's proceedings.

Trenton has gone out softly and now he was leading in the muffled witness whose agitation strangely mingled yet contrasted with that of the audience.

"Will the counsel unveil the witness," said the court.

Slowly the trembling figure was unwrapped of the concealing folds, and—did not some cry escape from Buhl-Bysee?—it was Blue Earth.

"Your honor," said the lawyer slowly, "behold the murderer of Corporal Smith."

"What! man, this is impossible, this is my friend; you have wrung from him by some diabolical means false statements in an hour when you have terrified him. Speak Blue Earth, who killed Corporal Smith?" Buhl-Bysee had gone to his side to assure him calmly.

"I did!"

"Impossible, your honor, this man is out of his mind, I have proof to offer that he is often out of his mind. Old settlers have seen him wandering about here out of his reason, Indians can testify that they have seen him so."

The attorney for defense acknowledged that he had seen Blue Earth so. Then he held up a coat, "Do you recognize this blood-stained garment as your own?"

"I do," answered the hollow voice.



## Ongon

"Subterfuge," cried the agent excitedly.

"May I speak?" It was Blue Earth asking to be permitted to tell his story.

"The witness shall be heard," spoke the court.

Then he told of his life. How he had been a club man in New York. Three or four years before—he confessed his memory was weak—he had taken the life of a fellow clubman in a fit of anger, and had carried his body to the basement. There he found another member fallen into a heavy sleep. The idea dawned upon him that this was the member who had severely denounced the murdered man early in the evening and had drawn angry retort. He could drug Buckingham and then, when the dancing resumed, carry him upstairs. It was all that Blue Earth could tell, but a newspaper which he drew from his coat told the rest.

"How came you to quarrel with Corporal Smith?" asked the court.

"He was an old friend. He was heavily indebted to me, for we had gambled together. He saw me bring up Buckingham and lay him beside the dead man, whom I had brought first. A year ago, at the time of the quarrel, he had threatened to confess if I did not give him some more money——"

He could not speak another word, but already the defense were bringing forward another witness. It was Mrs. Castor. She confessed that on the night of the death in New York she had overheard conversation between Blue Earth and Smith.

"Your honor the name of Blue Earth is Tarney. I worked in the service of the Tarneys, but being taught to think twice before speaking once, I kept it to myself." Then she related the words that corroborated the confession of Blue Earth.

Chemicals and a sponge removed the paint from the face of the guilty man and there were no eyes that cared to look upon him.

And so the innocence of Buckingham was established in the acquittal of Ongon. Then, without warning, was paid the price sweetly.

## LI

### "LEAD ME"

Josie brought in Mylo. A murmur of delight was on the lips of every woman present at the sight of the beautiful child. The babe's sweet laughter and precious innocence of all that had hap-

## “Lead Me”

pened was a relief even to the judge who begged to hold for a little the grandchild of his old friend, Col. Ames. It was then the village proved that it had a heart. Mothers asked for the child's name and others still took Minnetonka into their arms and welcomed her even as the new daughter of one of Virginia's noblest men.

Now Mylo was back in Minnetonka's arms and his little hands were playing with her eyes and lips, while his own were murmuring the only word he had learned to say: Mamma, mamma, mamma!—how the recollection came back long afterward of the fondness between the two!

“He is like his father and mother both, you may well be proud of your son,” said the young wife of an army officer.

“Aye, I am as proud of my son's Indian blood,” said Ongon, catching up the child before the Indians and all; “I am as proud of his Indian blood, as Randolph of Virginia was proud to own that Pocohontas' blood flowed in his veins!”

Even Tarney, the murderer, with the stains of his sin upon him, turned and looked wistfully at the child as the officers of the law were leading him away.

Minnetonka saw it and it was like her, they remembered at nightfall, to have gone to the prisoner and to have laid her hand upon his arm.

“I forgive you, I pray Heaven to forgive you too.” So like a prayer she spoke it, malice died from the eyes of those who hated the murderer.

Then they led him away to his cell and afterward it made his death easier to repeat her prayer. They said he died crying the words to his Creator, “I pray Heaven to forgive you too.”

They admired the beauty of the princess and more the charm of her natural grace, for her quick gliding seemed the accord her limbs gave to some inner melody.

“You may be proud of your wife too,” said the officer's wife to Ongon, all assenting.

“Our marriage has been the conforming power of a great love, annihilating the differences of time,” he said reverently.

“A vast eternity, Ongon,” murmured the princess, taking her husband's hand. She was excited, it was noticed, over the reception given her and turned to touch the pin in Mylo's dress.

“See, it is thy mother's—oh to find her once more and hear Jean speak of thee, Ongon—Ogden Ames!—Oh, Jean, thy love so passing fair——”

Then her voice lost its strength. “Lead me,” she murmured

## Ongon

faintly, putting her hand upon her heart and tightening, only to relax, her hold upon Ongon's with the other.

The smile that had come with the mention of Jean was caught upon her face and refused to leave it until some higher power came to release it forever from its earthly beauty. Minnetonka was dead. Even as Ongon's arms were wrapped about her, and Mylo's hands were playing with the white flowers in her hair, an angel had called her from them. Led to the robes that were whiter than snow; led to the beautiful lands beyond which no ruler could remove her; led into the light surpassing all the dreams of the mornings when she had sat by Ongon's side and murmured her delight at being a human soul; led by the angels unto the King of kings. Oh, Minnetonka, by thy life the inspiration to work out thy love and thy patience for thy people!

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace."

Buckingham had repeated the words Ongon had left for him, and gratefully the chief-king bowed his head in acknowledgment. Then they went out one by one until Ongon was alone with his sorrow. His eyes had seemed to wish it.

## LII

### A VISITOR IN THE NIGHT

At midnight, when the body of Minnetonka lay in the lodge awaiting the morning's burial, came a figure moving rashly past the Indian guards. He entered the death chamber, and when he removed his hand from his lantern, he was armed. Even so he lifted the sheet from the face of the princess and gazed upon her calmly beautiful features in a manner that belied the man. Again with utter indifference to the danger that beset his progress he made his way into the room where Buckingham rested. He was not asleep and the light thrown upon his face made him start up and seize his arms lying on the chair beside him.

The intruder wished to be known, for he turned the light upon himself, standing straight and fearless before the pistol of Buckingham.

"What, Buhl-Bysee, are you mad, to venture here!"

"Hush, follow me."

He made motion to go out by the way he had entered, but Buckingham, aware of the instant vengeance the Indians would wreck upon him should they awake, whispered to him to follow him instead. His door led directly to the open air. "Not yet, beyond this

## A Visitor in the Night

place," said Buckingham, when the agent halted. "Here, we are safe, what message do you bring, Buhl-Bysee?"

"Blue Earth is my cousin, Fred Tarney, I mean, Buckingham, and until yesterday, I swear to you I thought him innocent and you guilty."

"Go on, I will believe you."

"I always believed you guilty."

"Yes, go on, I caught that before."

"But I have hated Trenton and I never forgave your friend for believing that I changed my name because of the War of 1812. I did not desert my company in 1813, here Buckingham is my honorable discharge, give it to Trenton, will you?"

"Very well, and what more?"

"Ah, my change of name was partly the result of fun. Bulbsy is not long, neither is it euphonious. A wager was made, however, that it contained the stem on which a distinguished name could be grafted. Blue Earth, Tarney I mean, suggested to begin by hyphenating the syllables of Bulb-sy. They made it Bul-bsy, then Buhl-bsy, and rested with Buhl-Bysee. That name I seized when I went abroad as having more dignity and power to it than Bulbsy. While in England I saved the life of a senator of the United States, and he offered in return to use his influence to get me a government position. And you know the rest."

"Yes."

"And I believed Ongon guilty. Do you know Clermont first suspected me, but when he found that I was innocent, he was a staunch believer in my methods and evidence."

"Of which I am aware, go on."

"I *am* an innocent man to-day, Buckingham. Of all that has happened, I am free from murder; I am free from murder!"

"You came to tell me this?"

"Partly so, it is better than life to tell you that I received not one cent of profit from the Indian treaty closed on the 21st, and I am guilty of no man's blood, and I have an honorable discharge from the war of 1812. In my forty-two years of life I have kept from dishonor, from guilt!"

"There is no fear of your going to jail," said Buckingham, completing the negative virtues of the agent. He might have mentioned the forgery, but when Buckingham saw Buhl-Bysee holding the lantern before his own face and exulting over the triumph of his character, he turned away to hide his contempt that he might have more pity.

## Ongon

"I have hated Trenton because he crossed my life——"

"Because you married the girl who was betrothed to him and saw her die in disappointment."

"Aye, if she had shown love for me I could have forgiven Trenton."

"Go on, Buhl-Bysee."

"To-night I had determined to take Trenton's life—I could have done it—they are sleeping side by side under the lindens over there. But the words of that dying princess to Blue Earth would not let me. I could not end my life by doing that which I have refrained from under many provocations all my life long. I might have but for her saying, "I forgive you." I have been into her death chamber to-night——"

"What, *you!*"

"Aye, man, and her face makes me go further. To-night—in the morning at dawn—they blow up the flag-room. Everything is set for it, powder and all—and I think, perhaps it is only a fancy, that somewhere the gypsy is kept there and her life will perish in the destruction."

"You guilty man—how dare you—aye, but we can save her before morning!" Buckingham started up with haste, but Buhl-Bysee caught him by the arm.

"Nay, listen further, you cannot find the fuses, hunt them as you will. But I am innocent of this, Buckingham. Others have done it. Cat's-paw's Indians, jealous against Bat Eye. I did not do this."

"Cursed be your innocence man, up!—will you hunt the mines with me? Come we are both ready, and our lives easiest spared to this world. We can save the girl!"

"Nay, Cat's-paw's Indians are there drunk. They have picketed the place until the time to run from the mines. It is useless. But I am innocent of Cat's-paw's death, Buckingham. I have no——"

But Buckingham had left him there with his self-congratulations on his lips. Already the east was paling. No time was to be lost, and doubtless all the Indians could do would be to throw a spark into the powder at the time of the explosion if there was to be any. A long fuse was out of the question he knew. Perhaps Ongon would know where—he turned to speak to Buhl-Bysee. "By the young wife within, you owe one thing more to your innocence, go do what you can to save the gypsy's life even for Trenton."

"Stop!" whispered the agent.

But Buckingham heeded not his words, already he was waking Ongon and Trenton.

# True Innocence

## LIII

### TRUE INNOCENCE

Jean and her aunt had promised each other to sit up together and talk all the night through, following the day when Ongon should know that he had a sister. The one favor she had asked of Bat Eye had been the permission of the letter to the court. But Bat Eye had granted them two. Their feminine heart had been rejoiced by the Indian's bringing on this great afternoon their stock of clothing—two old leather trunks full of civilization, Jean had said, dancing savagely before the delighted Indian. She had even made him sit down while she entertained him with various costumes from the trunks. Exhibitions of silk capotes, large sleeves, rich mantillas, negligée hats of tissue straw kept in wooden boxes, aprons of moiré in deep colors, blue sapphire satins, rich emerald-green velvets, dazzling reddish modes—how the deep colors fascinated the hungry Indian eyes!

"Like color," said the redman simply.

"And you didn't know when I dressed in Aunt Mary's, or when in my own colors, did you?" laughed the happy girl. "You see I'm quite tall too, but you don't appreciate a slender waist from the fulness of maturity, do you Bat Eye!"

"Nay, she could not be stopped, her spirit was bubbling over. "We call you Beauty when we are alone. Friend Eye, you have been so good to us lone palefaces. Tell me, will you stay with us and help Ongon always?"

The Indian nodded his agreeability.

"Will you be our household Indian?"

"Ugh, others call Bat Eye coward then, a woman's man, couldn't do that."

"But you will be friends—you and Wautoma, and drive out with us?"

"I must keep my Indians first," said the chief, thinking of his duties. "My Indians are drunk to-night and disagreeable to manage."

"Oh, pity, and who gave them liquor to drink, Bat Eye?"

"Buhl-Bysee."

"Never mind, Friend Eye, we should be happy to-day."

But he could not help minding, for by and by he asked to go to see how the Indians were doing about the place. It was ten o'clock and he must see.

## Ongon

And so he had gone, but with Jean's spirit scarcely clouded.

"This is Ongon day. We have to be merry, Aunt Hardscrabble Devere, wilt thou attire and thy niece also?"

At eleven the girl was kneeling in her chally dress with the small bouquets blossoming over the white ground, and the high body crossed over with epaulettes on the sleeves. She must first smooth her aunt's lilac lawn and add to her head a small cap of black blonde and floral work.

"There, polished ceilings of cedar and devoted women in odorable dry goods, let us talk of Ongon!"

Gently her aunt held her hands and kissed the radiant face of the girl and told her with her eyes that now her faith had conquered.

"Yes, auntie, by this time Ongon knows! Listen, I will tell you all about it. He saw Catherine arise with my letter in her hands. She was beautiful in this hour. She held what a true woman would have loved to read softly and tenderly. When she read of the Indian names in Virginia, Ongon smiled and looked proudly at Minnetonka. He wot not then that Virginia should mean so much to him. With her deep emotion and true artistic feeling, Catherine stepped softly through old Opecquon to our tomb. But we will not be sad to-day—she hurried on to tell of the babe and of the cry 'Ongon, my child, Ongon.' Hark, auntie, I hear the Indian woman tell it yet. Think of the impression it made on my mind four years ago. It was sweet sixteen to learn that brother might be alive. Then we sent and searched for him in vain. But we remembered that steamboat ride of our own, and how the Indian woman had told the story to her grandchildren the night we camped with them. She believed that somewhere this Ongon lived, a wonderful chief. Then when other's failed after a year, you listened to my pleas—we began the 'women's willowy and emotional search'. '*Veni, vidi, vici.*' Nay auntie, I never saw him, but you did that day when I came too late, tell me how he looked again?"

"He was greatly tall, Jean, with all the Roman in him that made your dear mother so commanding——"

"Alas, poor papa and his daughter!"

"Dark as——"

"As all the Deveres."

"Yes, with my black hair——"

"And you haven't a gray hair in it yet, Auntie!"

"And a voice of such manliness, yet gentleness, the very birds drew near him——"

## True Innocence

"Minnetonka taught him that—but that was my thrush, Auntie, it even drew near to—Major Trenton!"

"Suppose Major Trenton should love you, Jean?"

"I think he does, auntie," confided the girl; "and during these long days I've wondered what answer I can truly give him when next our eyes walk together—beyond even my dreams when alone."

"You are too honest, Jean."

"How do the Scotch-Irish lovers behave, Auntie?"

"Oh, they come to it abruptly, Jean."

"Then abruptly I will tell Major Trenton I like his name. Listen Auntie, John-Jean, Jean-John, Jean-Jean-John—are they cathedral tones, or do they sound like a breakfast gong? If I'm Scotch-Irish, then I can say quickly, boldly here aloud in this scented chamber of Ongon's, when the wedding bells ring, I want them to say nothing else but John-Jean, Jean-John!"

So she had told the one who had been to her as mother. If in the night, or at daybreak some sad wreckage of her hopes should come, it was worth the while, aye, it was worth the while for the dear lips to move at last into the utterance of all her soul.

Oh Heaven, that hearest the holy resounding joy from beautiful lips, speaking to-day before to-morrow dawns with its crushing weight of sorrow—yet is it not best to have loved and lost!

"Aunt Mary, you are so still."

"I will not speak my thoughts."

"Then I will laugh at your closely set teeth, beautiful Miss Mary Devere!—but you do like Major Trenton?"

"Yes, dear."

"Then look not dark as Beauty when he left to-night. Come we must talk. 'Tis only two and I have much to say."

Catherine should marry some wise philosopher, she said, and go with him and her art. Yes, Catherine would finally put some one before her art—and they should spend their days with Ongon for the Indian. No, she, Jean, would not follow Ongon. Three months in the year she should spend with her brother, her children playing with Ongon's, and every girl of them learning to shoot like—a very gypsy, as all the Ames' girls had learned to shoot. But the rest of the year they should spend for the whole nation.

"My husband must go to congress and sit in grandpapa's seat—figuratively speaking—and plead for our country's honor and high duty. Will not his wife make a brilliant Washingtonian lady, Aunt Mary? They will speak of her silken sunset locks—to wit, her reddish hair; and of her large and glorious orbs, namely her



## Ongon

mischievous eyes; and of her wit and fascinating learning; *e. g.*, her charming motto, best foot forward! Nobody will believe that she paid a hundred dollars in gold to learn to manage a circus serpent, and an old grizzly bear, or another and another hundred to '*loan*' them. Ugh, it took hope of meeting Ongon to go through that training! But the fangs were out, and I'd have had them draw the snake's muscles too, if Coilie could have survived. And then to think Cat's-paw did not need the serpent for his final conviction! But we have gained the day. So shall my husband approach his problems. I shall ask him every night what plans he has made, what courage he dared. But he shall never know I ask him, for it must be charmed out. If I were a man I should never tell a woman anything if she had not the subtilities to draw out more than I had in me."

"Oh, Jean, you were enthusiastic from the time you first talked at ten months!"

"Softly, Auntie, Bat Eye has fired the first shot to tell us of the dawn as he has said he would. We are now to talk only of Ongon until the second shot announces the rising of the sun."

"It was not as Bat Eye's shot, my dear."

But Jean had no ear for the protest. "Auntie, when I meet Ongon, I shall tell him that he has already lived beyond the measure of even a great man's life. Every day hereafter is a day loaned to him out of eternity. Far beyond his day he has mapped the constellations and taken up the light from the stars. His constructive work depends from now for its success upon others' understanding the Indian's nature. More psychology and more of the eternity of old Opecquon shall be needed ere the Indians become no more aliens but citizens of America. I shall say, Thank God, Ongon, for the problem. And he will talk to me—oh, when we shall talk together what shall we not see, perhaps, even before the year is ended we shall meet, but how can I talk to him when I should want an angel's lips to speak to him my thoughts, but—hush!"

The sentence was never finished for a second shot, followed by a third, and a fourth, came down with metallic distinctness through the ventilating shafts. Then a long, rumbling roar, succeeded by a shock that was wrenching the very posts from their foundations.

# The Charge upon the Ruins

## LIV

### THE CHARGE UPON THE RUINS

"Jean in danger, did you say?"

The men were on their feet with the first whisper from Buckingham. Rapidly the latter told of how Buhl-Bysee had entered the lodge and, seeing Minnetonka's face, had been led to tell of the drunken Indian's frenzy and the plot to blow up the flag-room. Ongon realized in an instant where Jean might possibly be—strange that he had never thought of her being imprisoned there—but he had never dreamed that Cat's-paw knew of the place.

He was not a man to run before his plan. "Pause a minute," he said, his voice was calm, but how on fire his eyes! Buhl-Bysee is right. The places where powder can be placed are many. If one drunken brave will let his own life be blown up, and has hidden himself in the recesses around the flag-room, it will be impossible to find him in time. But we must charge straight into the men, and as soon as I can get past them, I will go into the study hall, if I can get to it. You are to take care of the men, one of you go wake Wautoma and his men. Leave one to guard the body of Minnetonka. Trenton, you come with me!"

Buhl-Bysee had heeded Buckingham's parting words and they could see him searching for the powder. "Go into the lodge," shouted Ongon to him. "Into the lodge, the flag-room lodge, call off the Indians there, never mind us!"

The agent had heard, for Ongon seemed to have been gifted with a far-reaching power to his voice then, that carried his orders like a trumpet.

The first bullet from a drunken Indian's gun whistled an answer past Ongon's ear as he shouted to Buhl-Bysee. Trenton was by his side, and soldier that he was his eye caught greater fire and enthusiasm from noting the spirit of battle in the chief-king. He had fought against the use of arms except as a last resort and now it had come. With Buckingham's brace of pistols belted to his side he ran the gauntlet of the second and third shots before he drew an arm. A savage was aiming at Trenton when Ongon sent him staggering backward with a bullet in his neck.

"Come on, Trenton, it will not kill him, charge!"

It was then that Ongon's strength proved to be the strength of three. One Indian was picked up and literally used as a club to beat down a group of five. Twice Trenton was able to return the

## Ongon

compliment, as he shattered the hands that were reaching for the neck of the chief-king.

"Ongon, do you not know Ongon!" shouted Trenton to the two Indians who had started to run, "help, make way for Ongon!"

Already the way was clear to the chief-king to make the flag-room in safety and Trenton bade him go on. "The Indians have recognized you, we are safe!"

The earth shook as Ongon descended the steps whose way was open to him. Then he was thrown back by a recoil of falling earth as the first explosion shook the underground structure. But if Ongon escaped it was only because he had not entered a rod farther. As the flying débris fell about him, the bodies of two men were hurled toward him. One was an Indian, the other Buhl-Bysee. Attracted by the groans of the latter Ongon crawled out from the mass of timbers and hastened to the agent's help.

"I am dying—is it Ongon?—I am innocent, Ongon!"

"Die in peace," said the chief-king, lifting him carefully to a clearer place in the open air. But already Buhl-Bysee was dead. Whether driven by passion to set fire to the powder, could never be known this side of the grave, except from his words.

Back again into the ruins, groping at first in the dark, then seeing suddenly, all too well, by the fire which had broken out below. At last he had pushed and thrown aside obstructions until he saw the door he was seeking. The burning of the furs and the smoke stifled him, but he had seized a beam and with one great blow had shattered the barrier between him and the corridor leading to Jean and her aunt. Even as he dropped the beam he was conscious that the ceiling above was shaking, then he had sprung to the door.

"Jean, my sister!"

"Yes, my brother Ongon, we are safe!"

The key Ongon had always carried with him, and soon but not too soon the bolt flew back, and brother and sister were in each other's arms amidst the crashing of the ceiling of the corridor.

"This is your Aunt Mary too, we kept the secret from you, just to have it for you, oh Ongon!"

But again the rumbling overhead, and then a second explosion that rocked the place where they stood. The pillar was falling that supported the ceiling.

"Fly, Jean, Aunt Mary, my treasures, for the second shot of powder has cleared the way for you, see, thank God!"

He was holding up the pillar with his great strength and until it fell he was safe. Jean saw that the only hope for him was their

## The Charge upon the Ruins

instant obedience. They had greeted each other only to part almost in the same second. Woman like she turned to kiss him there even as he stood holding the ceiling from crushing on their heads. "Oh, my brother, I love you so," then she followed after her aunt, only to find her, alas, struck down by a falling timber that must have killed them both. But the way was clear and Ongon needed her flying feet. Beyond where the corridor had begun she met Trenton.

"Go to Ongon, Major, through that pass behind the fallen cedar. I will send Wautoma immediately. Ongon needs you."

Neither had paused a second, though Trenton had seized the beam, at Jean's motion, that Ongon had used to strike in the door and was staggering on under its great weight.

At last she was in the open air, past the body of Buhl-Bysee into the arms of Josie and Catherine.

"Aunt Mary is killed, where is Wautoma?"

"Here," came from the lips of both Wautoma and Bat Eye at the same time.

Jean had only to look towards the place whence she had come, and to repeat the name of Ongon, to tell Bat Eye all he needed to know; pulling Wautoma after him he was within the ruined structure by great leaps.

The women had no time to speak to each other, for an Indian had run forward repeating a sentence in broken English. "Comes on board, Ongon and Wautoma bring soldier on board, dying!"

The sight followed the warning; on a plank of cedar, which they were using as a stretcher, two strong figures were carrying out the helpless form of the wounded man. Jean's lips had moved wildly with the first cry of the Indian, and it was now she who was first to observe the Indian's mistake. Not believing it were possible, when told to announce that Wautoma and Trenton were carrying Ongon, in the belief that Ongon was immortal, Wautoma's Indian had cried that it was Trenton dying.

"He lives," said the soldier tenderly, as Jean met them with clasped hands and tightened lips.

The task of holding the ceiling even until Trenton had arrived, had been too great for mortal strength. Slowly it had lowered upon the chief-king and he could not spring far enough to escape the timbers. Mercifully the terrible weight had fallen upon his chest when he had almost protected himself by pulling the pillar upon the trunks as he leaped and slid forward.

"I did my best, Jean," said Ongon smiling in spite of the pain.

## Ongon

"I—I have burst a blood-vessel, come nearer, my sister—I am growing weaker fast: ah, I shall know your face in heaven—God bless——"

Fondly Jean bent over him fearing to touch him lest she add to his distress. His lips moved again; the words seemed to come to him in the Indian tongue, as he quoted St. Paul.

"Noon gum dush ween——"

"Yes, brother. 'For now——' "

Brokenly he whispered the sentence with Jean nodding that she understood him and repeating his words to him in English, while she forced back the tears bravely——

"For now I see through a glass darkly. . . . but then I shall know, even as also I am known." Ongon was dead, with Jean communing with him that it was "from darkness to perfect light; from earthly mystery to Heaven's love."

Then, not knowing of the princess' death, she asked some one to go tell Minnetonka gently. Catherine thought it best to murmur that the princess had been waiting just beyond the shadows.

And when they feared that her heart would break with its burden of sorrow, the sweet mastery of the girl who had lived for this hour of meeting, proved that she was not apart from her brother. Heaven had not left the heart of the orphan child desolate. "It is well," she said. Then she begged a moment with Ongon. "If you could bring the maple leaves," she whispered. And they understood her. Afterwards when Trenton had attended gently to the care of her Aunt Mary, Jean looked up gratefully. "Come," she murmured, putting her hands in his. And when he knelt by her side, they were sorrowing as one.

Beautiful were the autumn leaves. "Help them, John," she whispered. And when the two dear ones were bannered about with the foliage, again Jean answered that it was well.

## LV

### CONCLUSION

The afternoon before All Halloween, the third since Ongon went home. In August, after a wild, weird night, the Indians had been removed in a body to the Far West. Of the few remaining, three or four have gathered at the lodge for a last greeting and parting.

Jean in her bridal dress moves softly through the old scenes to which she has returned after two years. She is a woman now, though Heaven, which keeps for her the brother with the father and

## Conclusion

the mother, will not ever take from her all of the girlish spirit with its joyous earth gladdening. But John Trenton, who suffers her to glide almost from his sight and hears her whisper to the trees the name of Ongon and call it softly over the plain, knows the infinite tenderness within the heart of his bride.

She has turned back to him at last and has half sheltered her head under her lover's cloak. They are standing together on the dear, old prairie, and, while her thoughts are inward, he is looking as if he were challenging the horizon to do her harm. He understands that she is thinking of her brother when she speaks—

"John, it is a large question—", and in the pause her face has in it the wealth of up-lifting affection that Trenton had seen in Minnetonka's when she had passed away speaking of Jean and of the vast eternity in her marriage to Ongon.

"The bride of Halloween is the vaster question of questions, whose life will surround her husband's with its inquiry," he answered, exalted with fervor that was almost devoutness.

"It is a large question for this day of days, John, but can Chicago remember those who helped to lay its foundations, when, like the slaves of Egypt who built the pyramids and the Greeks who achieved the Parthenon, her children shall soon be scattered throughout all lands, with some already taken above?"

His answer was not far from her thoughts. "You asked that we kindle sacredly to-night once more a fire in the old fireplace in the lodge, Jean; I have had part of the wood brought many miles."

When she looked up again from within the blue depths of her eyes that watched with all life for him and through him and unto him, he told her of his fearful boldness. On her ancestors' great estate in Virginia, whence they had come to Chicago to be married, he had found a dying tree. A friend of the family had shown it to him and had told him how all Winchester had seemed to love it. On this maple tree when Ongon was born her father had carved with pride his son's name, "Ogden Ames."

"I had the tree cut down, Jean, and sent it hither. And when we see it turning to ashes to-night as we pass through the Halloween it will be a memento in our hearts, I think, to live more truly than if we had tried to keep the wood."

"Yes, John."

"Oh, Jean, speak not so sacredly. I fear—I fear it is too good for Heaven to lend your life long unto mine."

"Nay, John, I have a strong body. It will be a long marriage, I am thinking. Does not that make your soul draw back?"

## Ongon

"Oh, Jean, will you love me forever in heaven too? I fear that thou art almost as God to me."

"Hush, John."

"Aye, I love Him too, but I see him through the wonders of his creation." And they spoke words too near the bridal hour for us to hear, until they gave a thought at last to the existence of others.

"Oh, John, I had almost forgotten to think that this is not all our wedding day. Four others are as happy as we!"

"When did you first know that Catherine was willing, Jean?"

"Two years ago and more, sir, when Catherine stood with me at the river, talking of the pictures destroyed in the ruin, and he drew near. When she turned to lift her eyes to him across the stream, even then they were softened with the beginning of a woman's great love."

"When he knew it not, nor as yet can believe it true!"

"But we know it all, John. How Mr. Clermont came to her confessing a broken faith at last in the worth of his profession, and offered his heart anew and his desire to give his life and means for the perpetuation of the work of Ongon. He was in earnest, and true to her fervent wish to make Mr. Clermont's life at last triumphant, she gave him her hand in the sweet promise that she would try to be a faithful help to him in the new life they both had chosen. But she told him that it was not in her power to give him her heart."

"Poor Clermont!" said Trenton gently. "He had the acumen to see that Buhl-Bysee was innocent, but——"

"Softly, John."

"Aye, he went with Ongon's blessing on him."

"And Catherine is as happy and feels as unfit for her happiness as Mr. Buckingham. See they are walking so softly together under my lindens how reverently they meet each other's eyes, John; are they not two handsome figures to stand with us at the altar to-night?"

"What more is it, Jean?"

"Do you know that once I thought that you and Catherine were destined for each other, and it made my heart tremble as if the whole world had been shaken."

Then he told her for the first time of the morning at four when her thrush saved them from a living sacrifice, as Providence guided its flight to mingle its timeliness with Catherine's dream. He almost dreaded to tell her that at midnight he had kissed Catherine, but Jean only smiled at his halting confession.

## Conclusion

"You will kiss her again to-night, John, but perhaps Mr. Buckingham will be satisfied with the returns of the season."

But we cannot linger over the many scenes that took place that afternoon around the lodge where now the city has tramped and noised aside the last vestige of the virgin beauty. How in the twilight, in the hour when Ongon's lantern men were wont to go forth to call the chiefs to the flag-room, Josie stood with Wautoma, Catherine with Buckingham, and Jean Ames with John Trenton before the fireside altar of Ongon and Minnetonka.

And when they were united in the bonds of marriage, Buckingham brought forth his sweet surprise for Jean, Bat Eye helping him carry it into the room.

"It is part of the side of the *Mississippi Belle* as you see from the lettering," said Buckingham. "I found from Bat Eye that once a year, at Christmas time, Ongon was accustomed to take a pilgrimage to the Mississippi. On one of these occasions Bat Eye accompanied him and witnessed Ongon's opening of a long *cache*. Being informed by Bat Eye, together we went lately and brought back this piece of the vessel in our canoe. This letter of Ongon's tells its own beautiful story. Ere we light the fire let me read it to you—or Trenton—or Catherine?"

He held the letter out modestly, with his eyes asking Jean's direction.

"Nay, do you read it Mr. Buckingham," said Jean with a voice of tender gratefulness.

Never was scene more simple than that of the long log hall lighted by candles and decorated with autumn leaves from the forest; and never greater grandeur, as the tall form of one friend of the dead chief-king stood in the midst of the bridal group, and read the touching heart-words of him who all his life long had seen through a glass darkly.

"Some day when I have won the hearts of my people," read the letter, "I shall seek those that knew them whose lives were responsible for mine. It is a growing desire of my heart to learn of my father and my mother who must have perished when this barque went down. For six years each Christmas time I have come here to open this *cache*. Various have been my feelings as I have gazed upon the name of the great canoe which bore my parents, and upon which their eyes have looked and smiled—the *Mississippi Belle*. Had I brother or sister who went down with them? Shall I know them in the world to come? Do they know me now? Thought of this must keep more sacred the Providence that took them and left



## Ongon

me to touch this great work. Oh, that some one after me may see its beauty and promise! But I come here most of all to think of my mother. How I should have loved to live and grow to manhood beneath her smiles. Not having seen her, I love her; shall I have eyes to know her, as on Transfiguration Mount the disciples knew Elijah though they had never seen him? The great text of my life has been, 'Then shall I know, even as also I am known.' Aye, the human heart, given to live my life, would wait upon eternity calmly. If other eyes ever look upon this relic of my parents' history and feel their hearts go out to me—and Ongon has craved the love of his fellow beings—friends, it is well; beyond hope lies the long eternal Spring when we shall be with God who is eternally young, as Christ remains crucified youth. Farewell—perhaps it is so that Ongon shall return no more to gaze upon these letters—farewell."

"Jean, you are so brave," said Catherine, folding Trenton's wife in her arms.

"Let us light the Halloween fire," whispered the girl as she knelt before the letters.

And they watched the flames wrapping themselves about the fallen tree, after the men had started the fire and upon it had laid the old witness of the joy that had attended Ongon's natal morn. Softly the light fluttered over the name that had been cut in the maple. After a quarter of a century the tree, finding no heart to cover the child's name, had kept its depressed bit of tenderness at first, then fashioned with the years into a firm covert of memory, to tell its old, old story to those who had come to walk in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley.

Why should Mylo have crept nearer the fire, murmuring that it was pretty? When Catherine knelt by the side of Jean, it was like Josie and Wautoma to repeat tenderly the words that were in the thoughts of all, as the name of Ogden Ames was turned to ashes—"In the Spring the maple leaves return."











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